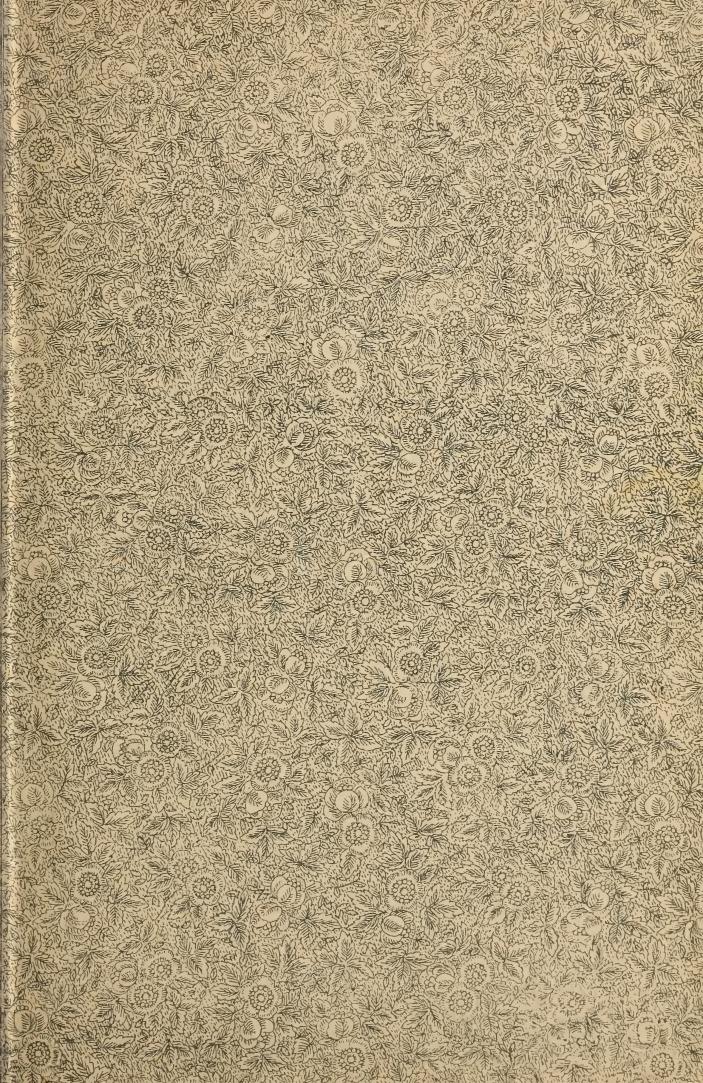
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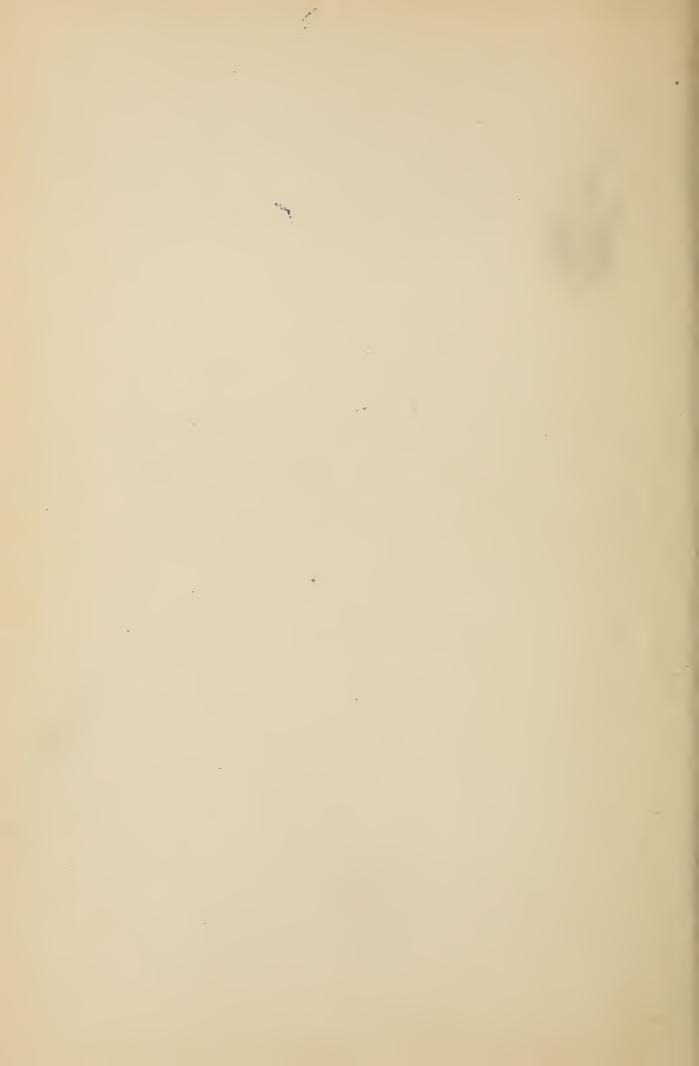
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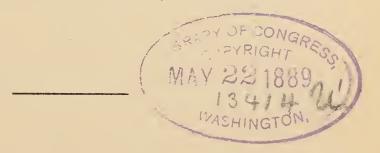


# Reformed Church.

A Sketch of its History, together with a Statement of its Doctrines, Government, Cultus and Customs.



By Rev. J. I. Swander, D. D.



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## PREFACE.

This book has been prepared at the request of the Reformed Publishing Company, from whose press it now goes forth upon its mission. That mission is to supply some further information in a popular way concerning the several branches of the general subject of which it treats. The book is compactly written. Its sketches and statements are necessarily brief, and yet as full and complete as limited space would allow in a volume of such character and purpose. It will be of value to all who are sufficiently interested in the trunkline of Protestant history to wish for a further acquaintance with the origin, growth, doctrines, government, cultus and customs of the Reformed Church.

In the preparation of the following pages, the writer has made free use of all the means and material at his command. The greatest warranted liberty was taken in the use of Reformed literature. As it looked down upon him from the shelves of his limited library, it seemed to send the echoes of its silent whisperings into his ears: "All things are yours." Some of the

sources of such information are duly credited in the body of the work: the others are sincerely acknowledged in this preface. Believing himself fully warranted in the exercise of this freedom, he offers no apology, but many hearty thanks for such indispensable assistance. It is hoped that the above statement will be satisfactory, inasmuch as whatever knowledge of the truth the writer may possess has reached him through the broader attainments of others. Whatever of merit the book may have is largely due to them. The defects are his own.

The fullest freedom has been taken, not only with the truths expressed, but also with the language itself contained in the adopted ordinances of the Church. The Catechism, Directory of Worship and the Constitution have been drawn upon for the most valuable material and the best language the book contains. Hoping that it may be owned and blessed by the great Head of the Church to the edification of his people and the glory of his name, the little volume is now sent forth as the fruit of much anxiety and toil in the writer's performance of a task assigned him by others.

J. I. S.

FREMONT, OHIO.

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# CHAPTER I.

#### HISTORY.

#### THE REFORMED NAME.

THE Church was before the Reformation. Otherwise, there could have been no such epochal period in history. In, and after the Reformation the Church remained what it ever had been as to its identity and inalienable properties, and through that great movement became what it had not yet been, and what it needed to be-the church reformed. As the Reformation moved forward the logic of history required that this Heavenly Institution, reformed from its heresies in doctrine and renovated from its corruptions in practice, should be called the Reformed Church. The name was not applied as from without, but grew forth as a fruit of the forces at work in the Church's own bosom. The title was just as legitimate in its birth as it is rich in its significance and appropriate in its service. There was no other name

under heaven by which it could have been properly called. No other name would have expressed its essential catholicity, its attitude toward the radical and yet conservative movement through which it had passed, and the unbroken succession of its historic onflow down the aisle of the ages.

The Reformed name was for a little while, not only the battle-cry, but also the bannertitle of all Protestantism. But as different modes of theological thought began to gather strength and prevail in certain schools, giving rise to divergent doctrinal tendencies, and as various types of national life began to stamp themselves upon the plastic substance of the Reformed faith, the natural and inevitable result was a shooting out in different branches. These respectively took their names, not from Paul, Apollos or Cephas, but from either some party leader, from the respective province in which the principles of the Reformation began to spread, from a favorite theory of church government or from the emphasis placed by others upon the mere mode of administering a sacrament.

As a consequence of such denominational or

sectarian tendencies, as mentioned in the foregoing paragraph, that part of the Reformation in whose constitution there were no prevailing, eccentric forces with which to shoot itself away from the stem into a branch was left with no other mission than to perpetuate the life of the root along the grand central trunk line of Protestant history. The Reformed Church, therefore, stands upon the records of history, not only as the original root and mother of all legitimate Protestantism, but also, though from no fault of its own, as a branch in the great Protestant tree, and a sister in the growing Protestant family. Under such proper view of subject, this distinct ecclesiastical body appears less remote from Catholic unity and less sectarian in contrast with others, even as it hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

THE LAND OF ITS BIRTH.

The Reformation was started in Switzerland. That staid and sturdy race which had rocked the cradle of William Tell, and dug the grave of the tyrant, Gessler, was wisely called by Providence when the fullness of the time had come to begin the disenthrallment of the Church.

Both the geographical position of Switzerland, and the political liberty breathed by her independent cantons were elements of fitness for the part that God had ordained the little republic to play in the central theater of the sixteenth century. The position was one which could most easily admit of and command the aid of all the co-operative agencies and elements in the adjacent territory and throughout the continent of Europe. Among the rockribbed monarchies and despotisms of Church and State, which then enslaved the nations of the world and the consciences of men, Switzerland still remained like an oasis of freedom in a boundless desert of spiritual and political sterility. Stalwart in their independence, simple in their habits and susceptible of mental and moral cultivation, the Swiss peasantry furnished the ground of that living rapport with all the restless people of adjacent countries, from which the Reformation received additional guarantees of its success as a religious movement, as well as the required conditions of that mighty impulse which after four centuries of beneficent results, is still sending its blessed influences with the onflow of the world's great history to mingle their heavenly rays with the coming splendor of the millennial morn.

#### ULRIC ZWINGLI.

The Reformation was neither the work of one man nor of many, but of the Holy Ghost, who wrought mightily through the Reformers in tearing down the strongholds of long established error. Among the agents through which God was thus pleased to glorify his name in the renovation and reinvestment of his Church were such men as Wittenbach, Œcolampadius, Leo Juda, Capito, Farell, Myconius, Bullin-Bucer, Luther, Calvin and Zwingli. The most prominent of these, excepting Luther in Germany and Calvin in France, was Ulric Zwingli. This great Reformer was born in the village of Wildhaus, in the county of Tokenburg. now included in the canton of St. Gall, on the first of January 1484, and died October 11th, 1531, on the bloody battle field of Cappel, as chaplain of the Protestant army which had marched forth to drive back the Roman Catholic cohorts that had dared to encroach upon the liberty wherewith Christ was about to make his people free from their yoke of bondage. Reared in a pious family, and placed at an early age under the plastic hand of that godly man, Thomas Wittenbach, he was well prepared by the Divine Founder of the Church for the work which was given him to do.

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE REFORMATION.

The Church traces its Reformed history back to the early part of the 16th century. There is no longer any dispute among unprejudiced and well informed church historians over the fact that Zwingli began publicly to proclaim the principles of Evangelical Christianity as early as 1516, in Einsiedeln, Switzerland. This was one year before Luther began somewhat similar work in Germany. It should, however, not be inferred from the truth of the foregoing statements that 1516 was the date of the incipiency of the great movement. Like all historic movements of fundamental importance for the world, the Reformation was the culmination of a preparatory process running through the preceding centuries. By careful searching, its roots, as well as the germs of its necessity, are found in the soil of the Middle-Ages. For centuries the forces and factors of history were used in

the Providence of God to usher in the fullness of the time. Wyckliffe, Huss, Savonarola, John Wessel, Delasky and others are numbered among the forerunners of Zwingli and his yoke-fellows in the work. They sounded the prelusory notes of the Reformation long before the awakening of those mighty thunders which sent their echoes from Alpine peaks across the valleys of the Rhine.

THE REFORMED STANDARD OF TRUTH.

The Word of God has always been the highest source of authority for the Reformed Church. As much may in truth be said of those branches that sprang from the great Reformed root, as also of the Lutheran denomination. And yet it is pre-eminently true of the Reformed Church Zwingli from the very beginning laid proper. primary emphasis upon the Holy Scriptures as the instructor in righteousness, as well as the final court of appeal in questions of ecclesiastical controversy. Luther, upon the other hand, wandered wide and long in the arid wastes of scholasticism before he reached the same conclusion. Even then he continued to hamper himself with the vain traditions of men by holding that the written word was not the exclusive

warrant for the truth of a doctrine or for the propriety of a practice in the Church.

Zwingli made all proper account of tradition and learning, and himself was a learned man. Perhaps the Protestant Church has not yet fully calculated the extent of his erudition and those broad scholarly attainments which, with his love for and proficiency in the ancient languages, helped to qualify him for the purely evangelical work which he was called to do upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, according to the sure word of prophecy contained in the Holy Scriptures. He was highly favored in the teachers at whose feet Providence placed him as an apt disciple. "Henry Lupulus," says Dr. David Van Horne in his "Life of Zwingli," "was noted for his correct knowledge of the ancient classics, and he soon infused a spirit of research and study in this direction, on the part of his pupil, Ulric, who was only too well pleased to pursue the studies marked out for him. . . . He was enthusiastic in his studies of the classics; delighted in the poems of Hesiod, Homer, and Pindar, on the latter two preparing notes in the way of a com-He studied closely Cicero and mentary.

Demosthenes, that he might learn of oratory and politics; and he also loved the wonders of nature as reported by Pliny, Thucydides and Sallust. Livy, Cæsar, Suetonius, Plutarch, and Tacitus were all familiar to him." Yet the Word of God in the original languages was the sword of the Spirit with which he met the arrogant Goliath of the papacy and put to flight the long-entrenched army of the aliens. was in this manner," says Zwingli's personal and intimate friend, Myconius, "that we recovered the knowledge of heavenly truth." "His eminent teacher," (Thomas Wittenbach), continues Dr. Van Horne, "was not only well versed in the ancient languages, but he added to this a profound acquaintance with the Holy Out of the barren desert of school-Scriptures. wisdom, destitute of all water, it was this excellent man's habit to lead his pupil to the living sources of God's Word and teach them to draw water from thence for themselves and their 'The time is not far distant,' said Wittenbach, 'when the scholastic theology will be swept away, and the old doctrine of the Church established in its room, on the foundation of the Bible."

In the light of all these providential circumstances that surrounded the formative period of Zwingli's character as a Reformer, and all the favorable elements that entered into the preparation for his reformatory work, it is now comparatively easy for us to see and honor him as the very chiefest of the apostles and standard bearers who first held aloft the banner of evangelical truth. The same is measurably true of Frederick the Pious. When the echoes of the evangelical battle-cry in Switzerland had been wafted into Germany, that noble foster-father of the Reformed faith in the Palatinate made the Bible the rule of his duty to his God and to his subjects. So, too, in all the history of the Reformed Church for nearly 400 years, it has been professed and taught that "the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which are called canonical Scriptures, are genuine, authentic, inspired and therefore, divine Scriptures; that they contain all things which relate to the faith, the practice and the hope of the righteous, and are the only rule of faith and practice in the Church of God."

THE RENOVATION NEEDED.

The evil from which the Church needed to

be thoroughly reformed was deep rooted, of chronic growth and manifold in form. For a thousand years the tendency had been away from the divine toward the human factors in the organic constitution of Christianity—from the incorruptible Word of God toward the corrupting traditions of men, from spirituality toward carnality and from the freedom of God into the service of sin and Satan. This tendency finally culminated in such glaring heresies in doctrine and such abominable deeds in practice that the cry came from within the Church's own bosom for "deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

To speak more in detail of these widely prevalent evils which then afflicted the Catholic Church, it may be said that in *doctrine* human traditions had been practically pronounced supreme to the inspired Scriptures of God's Word; that the popes had arrogated to themselves the authority to set aside the ordinations of heaven; that the priests claimed power to forgive sins; that the dignitaries of the Church could sell indulgences, or the permission to sin without fear of punishment; that the Lord's

Supper was a sacrifice in which the priests offered Christ repeatedly for the sins of the people. In practice the Romish priesthood was full of stupidity, profligacy and scandal. Pride, pomp and indolence prevailed among the prelates. Ignorance, vice and listlessness reigned among the laity. The sacred institutions of religion had fallen into contempt to make room for the feasts of carnal dissipation. "The public worship of God," says Mosheim, was now no more than a pompous round of external ceremonies, insignificant and senseless." Empty ritualism, theatrical display, the employment of unauthorized means for the false propagation of Christianity, vanity Church fairs for the pretended purpose of Church extension and carnal revelries in the name of religion surpassed, if possible, a similar category of perverse tendencies and practices now seen in some of the Protestant congregations of the nineteenth century. The Church was still the body of Christ, but full of spots and wrinkles. Such a state of things called for a renovation—a reformation. Zwingli and his coadjutors heard the call and proved by their actions that they were not disobedient to the heavenly mandate. Knowing

that the Church could cleanse its ways only "by taking heed thereto according to God's Word," they stepped to the front, denounced the alarming evils of the age, unfurled the banner of truth and purity, and identified themselves with the noblest cause that ever enlisted the sympathies of consecrated men.

#### MARTIN LUTHER.

As Luther did not belong to the Reformed Church in the sense that this relation is to be understood of Zwingli and some others, the scope and purpose of this little book neither permits nor requires of us to speak of him at length; and yet there are reasons why at least one or two short paragraphs should in this connection be written of that good, great man. He was justly honored in his age, and as long as the influences of Protestantism shall endure he will continue to be held in high regard as the human head of a great party in evangelical Christendom. It was no fault of his that his party followers became charmed at the magic of his name, and placed it at the mast head of a denomination, so that it became etymologically the root of that significant word—Lutheranism, which is so appropriately expressive of a distinct mode of apprehending some of the fundamental truths of the Christian religion.

Martin Luther was born at Eisleben, Germany, November 10th, 1483. He was only one year behind Zwingli in preaching against the evil tendencies of the times, and in publicly proclaiming the pure principles of evangelical truth. His name will ever appear upon the page of history with no less luster than that of the Swiss Reformer.

#### THE SACRAMENTARIAN CONTROVERSY.

As the result of different modes of apprehending the truth, and partially from a misunderstanding of each other's respective positions, a controversy arose 1524 between Luther and Zwingli concerning the manner of Christ's presence in the Holy Supper. Luther contended for the literal rendering of the Lord's words: "this is my body," while Zwingli translated "this is" by the words "this signifies." Dr. Hase, the Lutheran Church historian, says that "Luther was boisterous and sometimes ludicrous," while Zwingli was more polished, but bitter. Probably the degree of Zwingli's bitterness may be most fairly determined in the light

of his noble conduct at Marburg, 1529, when, as the above named Lutheran historian states it, "Zwingli was induced by the strength of his convictions, with tears, to offer Luther his fraternal hand, even if the principal points of their difference should remain undecided, but this was rejected." Two years afterward Zwingli passed into the skies to receive a martyr's crown, and God called his successor to the stage of the world's great theater. That successor was

#### JOHN CALVIN.

Having noticed Switzerland as the earliest historic ground, and Zwingli as the first historic leader, we now proceed to inquire after the secondary sources of the Reform movement. Next to Zwingli is Calvin. He was born at Noyon, France, July 10th, 1509, after Zwingli had already been three years pastor of the congregation at Glarus, and about the time that Luther was upon his suppliant knees at Rome attempting to ascend through Pilate's staircase to obtain a promised blessing from the Pope. Calvin was highly favored in that Providential ordering of things which deferred the date of his birth until others had sown the seed and

watered the growing crop for his mighty sickle. If Calvin's star shines out with greater luster in the galaxy of Reformed theologians, it must not be forgotten that the Swiss Reformer prepared the way for the great logician of Geneva. Zwingli was not the harbinger of a greater man,... but the predecessor of a different type of a man -a man whose vigorous intellect gave him peculiar qualifications for the ready comprehension of religious truths, and the arrangement of them logically and systematically in their relation to each other. For example: Zwingli had failed to bring out prominently and with full emphasis the fact that in the Holy Supper a life-union with the person of Christ is realized in the true believer. Calvin, belonging not to a second-class place among the Reformers, but to the second period of the Reformation, took up the work where Zwingli had laid it down. touching the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Calvin's quickness of perception soon seized this fundamental truth of Christianity, which Zwingli had as yet only partially apprehended, and carried it forward in its further development toward its subsequent formulation in the Heidelberg Catechism. The Reformed Church is greatly indebted to John Calvin for the contributions of his Christian genius toward the solution of this problem as now held in its honored symbol of faith. Next to Calvin, as the third great Reformed theologian, is

#### PHILIP MELANCTHON.

As early as 1523 the writings of Zwingli had spread in Swabia, Bavaria, Franconia and Alsace. His influence reached out rapidly and told powerfully upon Southern Germany. In that country it aroused the opposition of Lutheranism fully as much as it did the displeasure of the papacy. With this Lutheran opposition Melancthon was at first identified, for he was one of Luther's followers and friends, and a better theologian than Luther himself. He, however, belonged also to that noble class of men who are willing to unlearn whatever they may have learned amiss. With this characteristic love for the truth wherever found, he combined an irenical spirit, a mildness of disposition and a most thorough Christian scholarship. Soon after his writing of the Augsburg Confession, which was designed to be not only the formulation, but also the impregnable Gibraltar

of Lutheranism, he changed the tenth article thereof with a view of having it harmonize with the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, he began to move so directly and so fast toward this cardinal point in the Reformed compass that already in 1530 Bucer felt himself justified in writing to Schwebel: "Melancthon stated that he would be satisfied with him, if only it were acknowledged that Christ is present in the Supper, not in the bread, and present to the soul, not to the body."

The best evidence of his conversion to the Reformed doctrine was the fact that even before Luther's death Melancthon began to suffer for righteousness' sake at the hands of such Lutheran party followers as Hesshuss and many others. This persecution was encouraged by a knowledge of his mildness and timidity. It is now pretty clearly established that Melancthon finally abandoned Luther's theory of the Lord's Supper, though he still lacked the courage openly to announce his convictions. In vain did Calvin urge him to come out in a public statement of his conversion to the Reformed faith, which was no doubt measurably attributable to the Genevan Reformer's influence then

telling so powerfully for the truth wherever the light of the Reformation was shining forth in its morning splendor. Moreover, the correct reader of Reformed Church history can not fail to see that it was a part of Calvin's mission to bear witness of that light which Zwingli, before him, had liberated from the Word of God, and to serve as a conscious conductor of that original current of heavenly electricity, which the Swiss Reformer had already drawn, through the study of the Bible, from the upper clouds, and sent abroad for the purification of the Church's polluted atmosphere and the ultimate healing of the nations.

#### An Unsatisfactory Truce.

Largely through the conciliatory spirit of Melancthon, and his changing of the tenth article of the Augsburg Confession to bring it into harmony with the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the controversy concerning the manner of Christ's presence therein was brought to a close. There was a truce between the parties from 1536 to 1552. The dispute was then opened again with more intense feeling than ever. The great question was substantially the same as that discussed at Marburg,

but the arena of conflict had expanded itself into a wider field. The fact of a real communion in a general way was claimed and conceded on both sides; but the Lutheran party insisted that the mystery should be defined and the mode of Christ's presence as well as the communicant's participation reduced to a formula. Furthermore, the Lutheran disputants demanded that the formula should teach Christ's sacramental presence as "in with and under" the elements of bread and wine, and that the Lord was in such union with these outward elements as to be received with them by the mouth of all communicants, whether believers or unbelievers. The Reformed held that Christ by his Spirit was present in the sacrament to be received through faith by believers only. The contestants in this memorable controversy were, on the Lutheran side, Westphal, Timann and others; on the Reformed side, Calvin, Hardenberg and Melancthon, so far as his constitutional timidity permitted him to take part in the discussion. While this controversy was being waged around the city of Bremen, the turbulent elements were in reality only shifting themselves into more cyclonic form with their storm center in

#### THE PALATINATE.

We have already spoken of Switzerland as the birthplace of the Reformed Church. Let us now take a glance at the historic province in which the Reformed apprehension of Protestant principles was first fully formulated into a confession of faith. This province is not now easily located on the modern map of Germany. It is, however, approximately correct to state that its southern boundary line crossed the Rhine not far from the city of Strasburg, and that it included territory on both sides of that river in a northerly direction towards its confluence with the River Main. At the time of the Reformation it was known as the Palatinate, (in German Pfalz). As the province lay on both sides of the river it was sometimes called the Palatinate of the Rhine. The City of Heidelberg was its capitol.

#### FREDERICK III.

During the time of the Reformation and for some years thereafter the Palatinate was governed by a ruler called an Elector. At the death of Otto Henry in 1558, Frederick III. succeeded him in the Electorate. This illus-

trious prince soon became proverbial for his Godliness, and is deservedly known in history as Frederick the Pious. He labored most assiduously to promote the spiritual, as well as the temporal prosperity of his people. His pious soul was, therefore, much grieved at the bitter theological controversy waged among some of his subjects. He was anxious to allay the strife by the use of moderate means, but soon found his heart sickening and saddening over his failure. More vigorous measures were, therefore, resorted to by this pious and courageous prince. Hesshuss and Klebiz, the leading disputants, were both dismissed from their professorial chairs in the University of Heidelberg.

About that time Frederick seems to have become very positive in his conviction that the dispute should be settled, and a rule of faith prepared and adopted in his own little realm. He had no intention of giving the entire world a standard of Reformed doctrine for all the centuries of the future. Writing to Melancthon, he received a favorable response from that great theologian. Encouraged by the result of such correspondence and other manifestations

of approval from various sources, as well as from the general tenor of the vigorous Reformed literature sent into his realm from Zurich and Geneva, he began to look around him for the men to whom the important work was to be committed.

## URSINUS AND OLEVIANUS.

Zacharias Ursinus was born in the City of Breslau, July 18th, 1534; Casper Olevianus in the City of Treves, August 10th, 1536. Classically and liberally educated, they both took high rank among the distinguished scholars and theologians of their age. Ursinus was the more profound thinker, and through his books communed much with the good and the great who had lived before him; Olevianus possessed more personal magnetism and lofty enthusiasm, and lived in closer sympathy with his cotemporaries. Possessed of fine natural abilities and excellent scholarly attainments, they had been appointed by Frederick to responsible positions in Heidelberg University. Ursinus was a disciple of Melancthon, while the mind of his colleague was receiving some special schooling at the feet of the great Genevan Master, John Calvin. These were the men whom Frederick appointed in the early part of 1562 to prepare the book which for more than three centuries has served the double purpose of an instructor in righteousness and a symbol of faith—the book that will live on in the centuries as long as the heart of the Reformed Church shall beat in the bosom of an expanding Christendom.

THE REFORMED SYMBOL OF FAITH.

Ursinus and Olevianus entered almost immediately upon the responsible work to which they had been appointed. Their labors resulted in the production of the Heidelberg Catechism. In performing their task they had no thought that the book would ever become what it now is—the subordinate standard of faith for the Reformed Church. It issued from the press at the close of the year 1562, was adopted and introduced into the Churches of the Palatinate on the 19th of January 1563, and soon began to prove itself the best formulation of Christian doctrine produced in that stirring, stormy century. Dr. Schaff, as quoted by Dr. J. H. Good says of the Heidelberg Confession: "It is the flower of the entire Reformation. It has Lutheran inwardness, Melancthonian clearness,

Zwinglian simplicity and Calvinistic fire, all fused together. It is rather the product of faith and piety, than of knowledge and theology." This happy combination of essential and complemental elements gave it immediate favor with its foster father, Frederick, and secured for it the growing admiration of unprejudiced Christian intelligence throughout the world. was soon received with approval and joy in all the countries of Europe where the Reformation had gained a foothold. Switzerland, France, England, Hungary, Poland, Germany and Holland, all seemed to compete with each other in their efforts to deck its brow with the chaplets of their admiration. It was soon published in many languages and dialects. The nations of Europe, and the peoples of the continents all around the planet began to stand upon the tiptoe of their anxiety to hear it speak to them in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God.

## WAR UPON THE CATECHISM.

Notwithstanding its merits and its meekness the catechism was soon assailed. Romanists and Lutherans sought the young child's life to destroy it. Its very lamblikeness called the lion of opposition from his lair and sharpened the tooth of his exasperation. Like the Reformed Church, it has suffered persecution for righteousness sake; and like the saints in heaven, it has passed through great tribulation. If it had been more of the world in temper and language the world would have loved its own. Under the circumstances, however, the little book provoked the opposition of turbulent spirits until they exhausted their fury upon its invulnerable truth, or found themselves rebuked by its pacific tone. Though assailed from every point of the compass, it stood, and still stands as firm as a rock amidst the dashing waves of heresy and hatred—of formalism and fanaticism —holding aloft, as a beacon light, the Reformed apprehension of Scriptural teachings, in confessional form for all people and for all ages.

# THE BRANCHING PERIOD.

As in the spheres of the vegetable and the animal kingdoms there is a branch period, so also is it in the higher realm of spiritual life as it holds and unfolds itself in God's kingdom which is embodied in the Church. This season or period is always at the time of favorable correspondence and co-operation between the inward life-force of the organism and the sur-

rounding condition of things. The plant cannot shoot its branches in a place where there is neither light, nor warmth, nor moisture. Just as little can the presence merely of all these conditions bring buds and branches from a lifeless rod. In the middle of the sixteenth century the church was ready to branch, and the conditions of the world were in the providence of God favorable to such a manifestation of the Church's life. This readiness or favorable condition on the part of the world consisted in its revived state of learning, the emancipation of the public mind from narrowness and superstition, the vigilance and political condition of the nations, all of which had been brought about or modified by the Reformation, even as that was the culmination of a movement whose roots were found in the earlier translations of the Bible, and the work of reformers from the time of John Huss, and all those antecedant influences which for centuries had been at work in preparing the continent of Europe for evangelical freedom and ecclesiastical multiformity.

THE ANGLICAN BRANCH.

The Episcopal is a branch of the Reformed Church. The facts of history require and jus-

tify this view of the relation between the To admit that Wycliffe had prepared the way of the Reformation in England is to grant no more than truth concedes to Huss in Bohemia, Savonarola in Florence, John Wessel in the Netherlands and others in different parts of the continent. It was not until after Zwingli had lived and died that England by an act of Parliament, 1534 declared her ecclesiastical independence of Rome and the Pope. This act was prompted by political rather than purely religious considerations. Instead of being primarily a movement in Church reform, it was more properly the opening of the door for the Reformation. In 1536 some English students, having received glimmerings of evangelical light from Switzerland, as also from the writings of Luther, went to Zurich to study theology. About the middle of the century, Peter Martyr a professor of theology at Zurich, in Switzerland, Henry Bullinger and Martin Bucer, all Swiss Reformed theologians, either by going to England or by correspondence with the English prelates, did much in the work of modifying the ritualistic order of worship as it had been used for centuries, as well as in helping forward

the work of the English Reformation in general. The Episcopal branch of the Reformed Church is so called from the form of government which obtains in that body. The Methodist Episcopal body is a very vigorous twig of the Episcopal branch of the Reformed Church, and has the same form of government, with a growing tendency toward Presbyterialism.

### THE SCOTTISH BRANCH.

The Presbyterian Church as a branch of the Reformed Church may be said to have been formally organized by the adoption of the Westminster Confession of Faith in 1647. At that time the Heidelberg Confession was nearing the end of its first century in the history of evangelical Protestantism. During that period John Knox completed his work as the great Scotch Reformer. As a student of Calvin he placed the Calvinistic impress, as well as Scotch staidness upon the Scottish form of Christianity. Filled with new impulses of fiery zeal from his great Genevan teacher, he defied the fury of Roman Catholicism enthroned in Mary Stuart. Having nothing but the fear of God before his eyes he preached the gospel to Scotland's Queen until his energy and eloquence dissolved

the tempests of her passion into the torrents of Knox died in 1572, but the work her tears. that he did as a Reformer will continue to live on in the history of his country and in the front ranks of the world's great march of progress. The Scottish branch of the Reformed Church, with its several ramifications in Europe and America, holds to the presbyterial order of church government. This as well as its views of God's unlimited sovereignty were largely derived from the Genevan school of theology, and yet not to the exclusion of the influence which came from Zurich, and Zwingli, and the writings of St. Augustine. The Presbyterian branch of the Reformed Church, as now flourishing in the United States, is a daughter of whose pedigree and testimony for the truth the mother may well be proud.

# Religious Parasites.

Whether in the vegetable or in the animal kingdom, whether in the natural, or clinging to its host in the supernatural, the parasite is a pauper and a pest. Its life is mere existence, its organism is low in the scale of being, its habit is theftuous depredation and its tendency is to degenerate. The Reformed Church, like

the Church in apostolic and primitive times, has always been afflicted with parasites. Because it is like a "tree of the Lord full of sap," these ignoble creatures cling to its organism and prey upon its substance. They not only crept into its cradle seeking to devour its young life, but have also followed it through all its history with a thievish propensity for spoil and plunder.

Among these parisitic growths may be mentioned all those lawless hordes of fanatics which prey upon the vitals and alienate the unwary members of the Church, while they appeal to their own interpretation of Scripture to justify their erratic zeal and stimulate their passionate impulses. They range from the imagination of the Muggletonians to the miserable monstresity of Mormonism. Some of them are mere revivals of old heresies with hereditary death in the pot. We mention the Anabaptists (1521), the Antitrinitarians (1528), the Socinians (1604), the Schwenkfeldians (1561), and the Swedenborgians, (1740). It does not fall within the proper scope and purpose of this little book to give even the outlines of these pestiferous sects. They may be tolerated but should not be encouraged. Even that Christian charity which

"believeth all things" may be allowed to shrug her comely shoulders in the boastful presence of their unwarranted pretentions. Suffice it here to apply to them this general formula of truth: Only that which grows legitimately out of the organism and yet continues in the organism according to the fundamental law of unity in diversity, can share in the true dignity of the organism and in the divinely ordained destiny that awaits it.

## THE PRINCIPLE OF PERPETUITY.

As the church did not come into being by the Reformation, it can never go out of existence by any malformations that may grow from, cluster around or cling to its organism. Neither can any legitimate branching therefrom work permanent injury to the Church. Indeed, the shooting of legitimate branches from the parent stem is one of the conditions ordained by the wise and benevolent Giver of all life for the continuation of the central stem in its upward growth. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." The general principle of truth underlying this Scripture of the Word is beautifully applicable to the Reformed Church through all the 373 years already numbered

upon the pages of its history. It has not only furnished a "noble army of martyrs" for the gloomy dungeon, the fiery stake and the immortal crown, but also its witnesses for the truth in almost every land; and yet the burning bush has not been consumed. Transplanted to all the countries of Europe, and subsequently into all the continents of the earth, it followed the example of its Divine-human Lord by adapting itself to the various types of national life it sought to pervade and save. In its new surroundings it always clung tenaciously to the essential principles of its Ecclesiastical being, and continued its fidelity to the conditions of its heavenly Charter.

## TRUTH DIFFERENTLY APPREHENDED.

Besides the Anglican and Scottish branches of the Reformed Church, already spoken of in this book, and which, as we have seen, took their denominational titles respectively from their adopted forms of Church government, there were other different Reformed organizations known in history by the name of the province or nation in which the principles of the Reformation took root and flourished. Hence history now speaks of what is known as

The Reformed Church of Switzerland, The Reformed Church of France, The Reformed Church of Hungary, The Reformed Church of Prussia, The Reformed Church of Holland and The Reformed Church or Churches of Germany. These all either received the Heidelberg Catechism soon after its adoption in the Palatinate, or adopted it as a rule of their faith at the time their organizations were constituted. Other catechisms already in use were usually allowed to retain their places, other modes of Christian thought were tolerated and other formularies of Scriptural truth were sometimes fostered. Among those of the sixteenth century, besides the Augsburg Confession, which was never antagonized with unchristian bitterness, was the First Confession of Basel, (1534); the Second Confession of Basel—that is the First Helvetic Confession, (1536); the Gallic Confession, (1559); the Old Scotic Confession, (1560); the Belgic Confession, (1562); the Second Helvetic Confession, (1566). In some of these there was a large, if not a prevailing proportion of the theology taught at Zurich or Geneva, or in both of these schools. Especially did they contain a growing vein of Calvinism. Calvin died in

1564, and yet, though dead, he still spake with more power and effect than the most of his theological survivers. His stalwart views of the Divine Sovereignty acted like leaven in all the Reformed theology of Europe.

The Heidelberg Confession had just enough Calvinism for the confiding heart of the Christian, and yet not enough for the speculative brain of the disputant. All the Reformed Churches, then as now, were at least moderately Calvinistic. Some of the members were so constituted as to allow themselves to be carried over into an extreme position. The catechism as moderately intoned with the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty was, therefore, not just what such persons sought after as they wandered away into the wilderness of metaphysics. On the other hand anti-Calvinistic doctrine was advocated by Arminius and his followers. Some of the churches were turned into debating schools, and as a consequence faith was sometimes retired to the back ground while human reason rushed to the front to seek a saving apprehension of gospel truth. The bulls of Bashan broke into the garden of the Lord's house and stubbornly refused to go out until

the disputed points at issue were either settled or explained by some new formula. This was the case to some extent in

THE REFORMED CHURCH OF HOLLAND.

John Wessel was the Wycliffe of Holland, and one of the Reformers before the Reformation. Providence was pleased to use his writings with other co-operative agencies to prepare the way for the Reformation in the Netherlands. While that independent and thrifty people were building their dykes around the Hollow-land and driving back the waves of the North Sea for the purpose of enlarging and securing their borders, the spirit of civil and religious liberty was moving toward the birth of the Republic and the full emancipation of "the Church under the cross." The Reformation in Holland was closely allied with political revolution, and both came through a baptism of blood. The sword of the Spirit and the sword of Maurice, the Prince of Orange, were simultaneously drawn against the combined powers of Philip II., and the Pope of Rome. It was a conflict involving martyrdom and heroism as over against the most relentless tyranny. After a long struggle the Reformed Church of Holland came up out of great tribulation leaning upon the arm of him who himself had come from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozroh. Toward the close of the sixteenth century civil and religious freedom were secured and acknowledged.

From the first the Protestantism of Holland was of a Calvinistic type. The Belgic Confession and Calvin's Genevan Catechism had been in use before the adoption of the Heidelberg Catechism in 1574. But the catechism, like the Bible, was susceptible of different interpretations according as it was approached from different theological standpoints. Hence a dispute arose. The conflict was not directly between the fire of Calvin and the spirit of Zwingli as stated by the historian, Hase. was the spirit of Jacob Arminius that projected the great theological dispute in the memorable Synod of Dort, (1609-1618). Francis Gomarus saw the truth through a pair of predestinarian spectacles, and championed its apprehension as embodied in Calvin's system of theology. The Arminians presented a justification of their anti-predestinarian creed. This was called the Remonstrance. It was opposed by a large majority of the synod, and Arminianism was

ecclesiastically condemned. After the death of the Prince of Orange, (1625) the Arminians were tolerated in the spirit of Zwingli and in the broad and liberal genius of the Heidelberg Catechism. The articles adopted by the Synod of Dort and confirmed by the States-General were regarded by the Gomarists as the true interpretation of the Heidelberg Confession, and were henceforth looked upon as the dyke built up by the Reformed Church of Holland for the protection of the Divine Sovereignty against any tide that might possibly arise out of the boggy lowlands of Arminianism.

THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN GERMANY.

As already stated in this book, the Reformation which started in Switzerland moved down the valley of the Rhine into southwestern Germany. Although Luther was and must ever be regarded as the great *German* Reformer, it is not to him that the Reformed Church in Germany traces its origin. He was the father and fountain of Lutheranism as something measurably different and entirely distinct from the Reformed Church in Germany and elsewhere within the expanding borders of Christendom. The writings of Zwingli soon found their way

into Germany and began to work like leaven in the meal. These were followed by the teachings of John Calvin, which were made known through his correspondence, catechisms, published tracts and his Institutes, which were read by scholars and theologians as early as 1536. These writings were among the influences which helped to modify the views of Melancthon whose reputation as a Christian scholar and theologian can never suffer in comparison with that of Martin Luther, his great human master. These three—Zwingli, Calvin and Melancthon —may therefore be reckoned and esteemed as the first theologians in the Reformed Church of Germany. To some extent they modified and gave greater clearness of expression to each other's apprehension of Scriptural teaching until their spirits blended with that of Frederick the Pious, and began to flow in the veins of the Heidelberg Catechism.

After God had taken all these good men to their reward in heaven, the Reformed Church in Germany entered upon its long season of disciplinary affliction. Like the infant Hebrew Church in Egypt, and the young Christian community under decaying Judaism, and the

Roman Empire, the infancy of the Reformed Church in Germany was sorely tried in the baptism of persecution. It would seem from a careful reading of history that all the angry winds of the universe had been turned loose to try the patience of the saints. The Thirty Years' War was terribly disastrous; and even the treaty of Westphalia (1648) was only an empty proclamation of peace when there was no peace. As pertaining to civil government the German people were divided among themselves. Petty princes took advantage of this misfortune and consumed the resources of the peasantry upon their own unbridled lusts. After being thus reduced to a state of helplessness the Palatinate was invaded by the Roman Catholic powers of France. Plantations were destroyed; cities were swept away by the ruthless ravages of war; Heidelberg, the ancient seat of learning, was ransacked with ruinous vandalism and Germany turned into a battlefield for the diabolical sport of despotisms enthroned. Many thousands of Reformed homes went up in the conflagrations of cruel war. The merciless invaders painted the horrors of hell upon the lurid canvass of the midnight skies by burning the hamlets of the German peasants. Some of these fled from their fatherland to find sheltering arms among their Reformed brethren in Holland. In this continued state of things it was impossible for the Reformed Church in Germany to be formed into anything like a compact organization. It has therefore been more proper to speak of the Reformed Churches in Germany. Among these may be mentioned the Reformed Church in the Palatinate, in Hessia, in Lippe, Friesland, Anhalt, Nassau, Westphalia, the Rheinish Provinces and in other parts of the territory now included in the German Empire.

In the early decades of this present century the Reformed Church and the Lutheran body in that part of Germany then known as Prussia, united, and are now known in that country as the "Evangelical Church." According to the terms of the *Concordat*, or agreement, this union does not imply or involve any charge in theological views or faith. "This Church Union," says Dr. Dubbs, in his excellent Historic Manual, "has gradually extended over Protestant Germany, and now includes the Churches which were originally Reformed, with the exception of

a comparatively small number of congregations, collectively numbering not more than 40,000 members. The Reformed Churches in the Union—by which we mean the Churches which still regard themselves as distinctively Reformed, though connected with the Established Church—have, according to an estimate in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, a membership of 465,120; but from a computation published some years ago in the *Reformirte Kirchenzeitung*, of Erlangen, it appears that the actual number may, perhaps, amount to about 1,000,000. The Reformed element in the Evangelical Church of Germany is, however, much more important than these figures would seem to indicate."

### OUR PILGRIM FATHERS.

Great prominence is given in the records of American history to the landing of the Pilgrims on the Rock of Plymouth. This is meet and right. They showed themselves worthy of a place in sentiment and in song. It is said that each one had a conscience in his bosom; and the truth of this report has never been doubted, except by those who believe that Roger Williams had a conscience also. It should not be forgotten, however, that there were others

about that time in the seventeenth century who endured hardship and displayed heroism because of certain conscientious scruples concerning matters of religion. It is reasonable to infer from well authenticated records of history that the Heidelberg Catechism was planted as a standard of faith in America several years before the landing of the Puritans. As early as 1614, emigrants from Holland settled in different portions of New York and began to regard this country as the "Land of the Pilgrim's pride."

Later on and mostly in the early part of the eighteenth century, Reformed emigrants came from Germany and Switzerland and settled along the Atlantic coast in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, Georgia and the two Carolinas. It appears in the records of history that during one year more than 30,000 left the Palatinate alone to seek a home in this land of the free. Poverty and that intolerable oppression which produced it drove many of the Reformed people from Nassau, Waldeck, Witgenstein, Wetterau and other districts in the Fatherland. These "sought a better country," and the most of them found it in Pennsylvania and adjacent

Dr. Harbaugh, in his Life of Rev. Michael Schlatter, "were truly pious, and though not able to bring their ministers, brought with them their catechisms, hymn-books and other devotional books, and in some cases also pious school-masters." If these were not pilgrims to a shrine, they were at least weary travelers in search of a place where they could erect their altars, profess their faith and transmit its blessings unmolested to their children.

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

As already stated the first Reformed emigrants that landed on American shores were from Holland. They came as early as 1609, and soon after founded colonies and organized Christian congregations on Manhattan Island where New York City now stands, and also, about the same time, where the city of Albany has since sprung up. Rev. Jonas Michaelius and Rev. Everardus Bogardus are mentioned as among the first Dutch ministers in this country. The first congregations were organized by the authority of the Classis of Amsterdam in the Synod of North Holland. From the same classis the Dutch pioneer ministers received

their license and ordination, and to that ecclesiastical body all the Reformed ministers and churches then in this country were subject. This relation of dependence and subordination to the mother church continued, with some modifications, until 1792. At that time the Reformed Church in America (then and later on known as the Dutch Reformed Church) consisted of five classes with about 120 congregations.

Having been weaned from the breast of the dear old mother in Holland, the thriving child began to feel the necessity of supplying itself with the means of subsistence from other sources. A theological seminary was thought of and talked about. In 1784 the Rev. Dr. John H. Livingston was appointed to take charge of the work of founding such an institution. The laudable enterprise was finally successful. Since then the Church has greatly prospered. At this time its organization includes a General Synod, 4 District Synods, 566 ministers, 547 congregations, 85,534 communicants, and 200,000 adherents.

The Reformed Church in America is noted for its possessions of great wealth, is respectable

in the broad and thorough qualifications of its ministry, as well as in the intelligence and culture of its laity. The church has a clear self-consciousness and a well cultivated self-respect. It is manifestly alive to the cause and in the work of missions. Some of its finest records in the foreign missionary field are found in the rising civilization of Japan. The Church is as orthodox as the Heidelberg Catechism which it Calvinistically interprets by the Belgic Confession and the Articles of Dort, and which it continues to cherish in the same warmth of fidelity to principle that characterized the age in which the catechism was born.

THE REFORMED CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

This organization was formerly known as the German Reformed Church, and is still so called by the ignorant. For a number of years there had been a growing conviction that this title was inappropriate and too narrow to express the fullness of the Catholic Church reformed, and, therefore, a consequent hinderance to the proper and complete fulfillment of its mission in the world. After proper constitutional action on the part of the lower ecclesiastical judicatories, the matter came up for

final disposition in the General Synod convened in Philadelphia, 1869, when it was officially announced that the title of the Church was changed from German Reformed to that of the Reformed Church in the United States.

FIRST CONGREGATIONS ORGANIZED IN THIS COUNTRY.

Aside from the German congregations previously organized in the Schoharie and Mohawk settlements in New York State, then called the New Netherlands, as early as 1711, and which have since been absorbed by what was then known as the Dutch Reformed Church, we come now to speak of those early German and Swiss ministers and people who first brought the Reformed faith from their respective fatherlands and planted it for permanent growth upon the American continent. The names now acknowledged as entitled to places upon the roll of our ministerial pioneers were George Michael Weiss, John Philip Bæhm, John Henry Gætschey, John Bartholomew Reiger, John Peter Miller and John Bechtel. These began their pioneer work in eastern Pennsylvania. The first Church erected was a log structure at Skippack in Montgomery County as early as

In 1746 Rev. Michael Schlatter, a Swiss missionary, was sent to Philadelphia by the Synod of Holland to look after the Reformed Church in that section of the country. He found forty-six congregations. They were in a confused and discouraged condition. To this state they had been reduced by a combination of unfavorable circumstances. Schlatter's arrival was opportune. He was a man of great prudence, full of self-sacrifice and eminent for Godliness. Like St. Paul, he immediately took upon himself "the care of all the Churches." His missionary journeys extended through portions of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia. After laboring in this country one year he had the way prepared to organize

## THE FIRST REFORMED SYNOD.

After some preliminary steps, the first regular meeting of this Synod or Cœtus was convened in Philadelphia, September 29th, 1747. Five ministers and twenty-six elders were in attendance. The organization was constituted under the authority of the Synod of Holland, to which it remained subject and reported its proceedings until 1792, when this relation was

discontinued on account of the revolutionary state of things in Europe. At that time the Cœtus became an independent body known as the Synod of the United States. It then consisted of nineteen ministers—a gain of fourteen during a half century. This small ratio of increase in the number of ministers is more easily accounted for when it is borne in mind that the Church was then passing through one of the trial periods of its own history, as well as the formative period of the American Republic—

## THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR.

In that great struggle for a separate and equal station among the powers of the earth, our Reformed fathers were, as a rule, true to the cause of their adopted country. While they renounced the world, the flesh and the devil, they helped to trounce the British army. Among these Reformed patriots were some of distinction. Baron Stuben was a German and a ruling elder in a Reformed Church. Tradition and scraps of authentic history mention the names of Revs. John H. Weikel, C. D. Weyberg, John Conrad Bucher and J. C. A. Helffenstein as Reformed ministers who did much for the struggling cause of their country

by visiting and encouraging the soldiers of the Continental Army. Many others, whose heroic deeds live in unwritten history, waxed valiant in fight and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

### AFTER THE WAR.

As already stated, the long struggle for independence left the Church in a desolate condition. Instead of reviving with the dawn of peace, things continued to grow worse. For years our Reformed Zion was exposed to all manner of evil. In alluding to that dark period of general decadence, Dr. Nevin says that great spiritual destitution prevailed on all sides with a disposition to acquiesce in it as something Increasing wealth made men covetous. proper. The catechism and liturgy were held in unrighteousness. Rites and forms were not viewed in their proper character and purpose as helps to personal heart religion. This great spiritual declension approximated death itself. And yet the bush was not consumed. There was still a living spirit in many Simeons and Annas waiting and working for God's set time to favor These refused to bow to the Baal of dead formality, and at the same time consistently persisted in declining to enter the Babal of pietistic fanaticism whose doors then, as now, stood dangerously ajar to receive and seduce, if possible, the very elect. But those days were shortened by

THE DAWNING OF A NEW PERIOD.

In 1817 a cardinal turning point was reached and passed. At that time the Church numbered about sixty ministers and probably three hundred congregations. The number of members is not known and can only be estimated, as previous to that time there were no minutes printed, and no complete statistics tabulated and left on record. The first printed minutes appeared during that year. This forward movement was followed in 1819 by a division of synod into eight classes, of which the Classis of Ohio was the one farthest west. This grand step in the right direction seems to have been conceived by a true missionary spirit. It was followed, as a matter of course, by an increased demand for a greater number and more competent ministers. Hence a Theological Seminary was planned. The matter came up in the synod at Hagerstown in 1820. The project of establishing such an institution went into effect

in 1825. The first seminary began its career in Carlisle, Pa., moved on to York, tarried a while at Mercersburg, and finally laid down its pilgrim staff in Lancaster. With this grand educational movement the Church took on a new lease of life and commenced to develop after a more heavenly pattern. Self-consciousness began to awaken in the Reformed bosom. Intelligent activity displayed itself in muscles and limbs. Strong and more regular pulsations of the throbbing heart began to send fresh life and blood through all the arteries. The strengthening of stakes was followed by the lengthening of lines and the driving of other stakes. The Classis of Ohio became

## THE SYNOD OF OHIO.

This body was constituted at New Philadelphia, Ohio, in June, 1824. At the time of its organization it was composed of eleven ministers and eighty congregations. As in the East, there was great demand for more fully qualified ministers. An effort was, therefore, made as early as 1833 to establish a seminary west of the Alleghenies. In 1851 this laudable undertaking was crowned with success. A Theological Seminary was opened in Tiffin, Ohio, in

connection with Heidelberg College. This prosperous Institution has been second to no agency in the Church in the work of extending the Reformed borders. Acting in harmony as sister institutions, the seminary at Lancaster, the Heidelberg Seminary at Tiffin, the theological department of Ursinus College at Collegeville, Pa., and the Mission House at Franklin, Wis., have already prepared and sent out about 1,300 ministers with seed to sow and sickles to harvest the ripening fields of God.

#### OTHER INSTITUTIONS.

Besides the seminaries noticed above, the Church has the following educational institutions:

Franklin and Marshall College	Lancaster, Pa.
Heidelberg College	Tiffin, Ohio.
Catawba College	Newton, N. C.
Mercersburg College	Mercersburg, Pa.
Clarion Collegiate Institute	Rimersburg, Pa.
Palatinate Collegiate Institute	Myerstown, Pa.
Juniata Collegiate Institute	Martinsburg, Pa.
Greensburg Collegiate Institute	Greensburg, Pa.
Ursinus College	Collegeville, Pa.
Calvin College	Cleveland, Ohio.
Allentown Female College	Allentown, Pa.
College of Northern Illinois	Dakota, Illinois.
Pleasantville Collegiate Institute1	Pleasantville, O.
International Academy	Portland, Oregon.

Wichita University	. Wichita, Kansas.
Claremont Female College	. Hickory, N. C.
Edgehill Family School	.Littlestown, Pa.
Girls' School	.Sendai, Japan.
Young Men's School	. Yamagata, Japan.
Training School	. Sendai, Japan.

# PERIODICALS.

The following are now regularly published and supported as periodicals of the Church:

#### ENGLISH.

Christian World	. Dayton, Ohio	) <b>.</b>	
The Heidelberg Teacher	. "		
Scholars' Quarterly		,	
Lesson Leaves			
Leaves of Light			
Golden Words			
Little Pearls	. "		
The Messenger			
The Guardian	. "	66	
Scholars' Quarterly		66	
The Sunday-school Treasury		66	
Sunshine		66	
Reformed Church Review		"	
Orphans' Friend	.Butler, Pa.		
Missionary Sentinel and Herald	·		
College Student " "			
Heidelberg Monthly JournalTiffin, Ohio.			
Reformed Church Record			
GERMAN.	70		
Kirchenzeitung and EvangelistCleveland, Ohio.			
Reformirte Hausfreund			
Der Læmmerhirte			

Der MissionarSheboygan, Wis.		
Die AbendlustCleveland, Ohio.		
Der KinderfreundSan Francisco, Cal.		
STATISTICAL SUMMARY.		
General Synod1		
District Synods 8		
Classes 55		
Ministers 822		
Congregations		
Members194,343		
Members unconfirmed115,199		
Sunday-schools		
Sunday-school scholars136,283		
Students for ministry		
Orphans' Homes 4		
Periodicals		
Institutions of learning		
Missionaries and workers in the foreign field 28		
D		

## PRESENT OUTLOOK.

It will be seen from the foregoing statement of facts and presentation of authentic figures that the Reformed Church in the United States is moving forward with all the embannered hosts of God. During the last 70 years the number of its ministers has increased from 60 to 822. This shows a gain of 762, or more than 1,200 per cent. in two-thirds of a century. The increase in membership and other forms of growth show something like a corresponding

ratio of gain. It is now doing the work of the Lord in thirty states and territories at home, and something toward the cultivation of the foreign field. Its missionary work is rapidly progressing. The future is full of promise. Especially does it so appear in the light of the fraternal relation between

THE TWO REFORMED CHURCHES IN THIS COUNTRY.

The Reformed Church in America and The Reformed Church in the United States with the same confession of faith, much history in common, as also titles which indicate a common origin and occupancy of the same territory, must have a mutual mission for the future. As the Rhine flows down from Switzerland through Germany to mingle its waters with many mingled currents in the broader bosom of the Main where all flow on together to the ocean, so "there is a river the streams whereof" are not only parallel in history, but also as absolutely inseparable as they are distinct. Who will say that such is not the case with the two organizations whose respective names appear at the head of this paragraph. They are not branches of the Holy Catholic Church in the

same sense that that term may be properly applied to those Christian bodies which are off-shoots from the parent stem, and which are correctly known by their respective denominational titles. The Reformed Church with that unassuming modesty which has always blended with and beautified its history, may say to them in truth and characteristic gracefulness: "Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee." Neither is either one of these two Churches a branch of the other. They are streams whose parting and parallel on-flowings were occasioned for awhile by Providential orderings. It was not so from the beginning, and should not remain so unto the end. A continued separation into the distant future would be looked upon as the most unnatural and unjustifiable thing in Reformed Christendom. It is the proper province of the historian to make a faithful record of the past rather than to either criticise the present or anticipate the things that must be He may, however, lay aside the pen and read the signs of the times as a watchman on Mount Seir. When this is done the rosy hue of daylight dawns upon his raptured vision. These two organizations can not remain apart

forever. Their history shows no ecclesiastical act of severance looking toward separation and disunion. God has ordained that they should be joined together, and man can neither put nor keep them asunder. We believe that the millenium of organic union is close at hand. In the realization of that event 700,000 members and adherents of *The Reformed Church in the United States of America* will join with happy hearts and exultant tongues to celebrate the grand achievement.

# CHAPTER II.

# DOCTRINE.

HISTORY THE BEST EXPOUNDER OF DOCTRINE.

THE doctrines of the Church may be studied to best advantage in connection with the records of its history. In the preceding chapter it was shown that Zwingli and the other Swiss Reformers accepted nothing as true and binding in religion which could not be proven by the Word of God. With them, as also with Frederick the Pious, the Bible was the highest rule of faith and works—the supreme standard of doctrine and duty. It so continued through all Reformed history, and the Church of the present does not abate one jot or tittle of this evangelical claim. If it be asked what the Reformed Church holds to be the teaching of God's Word in all essential matters pertaining to human salvation, the answer is given in the

contents of the Heidelberg Catechism. This is its apprehension of the teaching of God's Word. It holds the doctrine of the catechism to be the doctrine revealed in the Bible, and that this symbol of faith embraces and teaches all things necessary for a Christian to believe and practice. Strictly speaking it contains

## No Peculiar Doctrines.

The Church of God is "a peculiar people" as contrasted with and distinct from the world-people, and the fewer the distinctive peculiarities found among God's people, the more peculiar they are in the Scriptural and truly Christian sense of that term. The same is true of the doctrines held by the people of God. Distinctive peculiarities among denominations are fostered and forced into prominence according to the measure of remoteness from Catholicity. As a rule, sects and their teachings are more truly peculiar than peculiarly true.

# CHRISTIANITY NOT BASED UPON DOCTRINE.

If there be anything distinctively peculiar in the Reformed apprehension of Scriptural teachings, it may be seen in its growing emphasis of the fact that Christianity does not ground itselfin doctrine as to the essential substance of its being. Sound doctrine, as well as the form of sound words, is indispensable in thoroughly furnishing the man of God unto all good works, but all these must ever be regarded as the product of *life*—the life of Christ. In him was life, and the life became the light of men. It is true that in Christ life and truth are inseparable; but man's first and deepest need is life. The shepherd came that the sheep might have life and have it more abundantly. Christian doctrines can not be consistently held except as they are acknowledged as flowing from the fountain opened up in the house of David. There can, therefore, be

# No New Doctrine

in the Reformed Church. The Church of Christ has not been re-founded, but re-formed. This reform movement was not a restoration simply of the original state of the Church. It was "rather an actual advance of the religious life and consciousness" of the Church to and by means of a deeper apprehension of God's Word with all its old doctrinal principles forever settled in the heavens. These deeper apprehensions may, to a certain extent, be new and

even broader than as previously held, but there can be no strictly new discovery of fundamental truths in the Christian faith. While the Heidelberg Catechism is claimed to be the best expression of the life and doctrine of the Church as apprehended in the Reformation period, it is also held as a new and advanced expression of "the faith once delivered to the saints." The correctness of the foregoing view is made more manifest in the light of the fact that much of the catechism is in reality a commentary upon

## THE APOSTLES' CREED

which had come down from the primitive age of Christianity voicing the faith of the Church along the line of history for more than a thousand years. If it, then, be asked again what doctrines are held and advocated by the Reformed Church, the answer may be correctly though somewhat succinctly given: The Reformed Church holds to all essential doctrinal truth as found fontally in Christ, revealed and recorded in the Bible, fundamentally formulated in the Apostles' Creed and more fully explained in the Heidelberg Catechism. From this it may be seen that any true and ultimate inter-

pretation of the doctrine of the Reformed Church will lead to the conclusion that

CHRIST IS CENTRAL IN THE SYSTEM.

In the use of the above expression it is not meant that the doctrine of Christ's person occupies merely a central place in the midst of all other doctrines belonging to the plan of salvation in a sense somewhat similar to that in which the Kohinoor diamond might be placed in a jeweled cluster of less precious and less brilliant stones. The Reformed Church, while holding that Christianity is constituted after a plan or pattern in the Divine mind, lays emphasis upon the fact that it is a system in the real and most organic sense of that term. Strictly speaking there can be no organic system which does not involve life. Of the Christian system, which incorporates the elements of the world's redemption, Christ is the living source and cen-His person contains the principle of life from which all Christian truths and doctrines evolve, around which they organically revolve and to which they must ever make their unconscious obeisance as they pass.

Dr. J. H. Good has given a more happy and practical expression to the truth of the fore-

going paragraph: "The catechism makes CHRIST (his person and work in inseparable union) CENTRAL, in its theology and religious teachings. . . It does not make any one doctrine the central object of faith, but it gives this place to Christ himself; not to any doctrine concerning Christ, nor even to Christ's teachings. . . The great object on which faith must fix itself is Christ Himself. . . . It lays special stress upon a LIVING UNION WITH Christ." The very first question ministers comfort to the believing child of the covenant by pointing him to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ. This beneficial relation is expressed in another form in Question 18: "Our Lord Jesus Christ is made unto us wisdom and righteousnes and sanctification and redemption." So also in Question 20. It is there taught that only those have hope of salvation who are "engrafted into him." Question 32 teaches that the believer is a Christian because he is "a member of Christ by faith." In Question 53 it is taught that the believer is "a partaker of Christ and all his benefits. Conceding to Christ this centrality of position in the Christian system, the Reformed Church is eminently

consistent in teaching that man is redeemed and

### SAVED BY SOVEREIGN GRACE.

"God's plan of salvation," says Dr. J. H. Good, "is a salvation based on the free grace of God in Christ Jesus." This is held and taught and contended for as over against pelagianism in all its varied forms. This arch heresy found its first clear utterance in Pelagius, a British monk of the fourth century. Among other false tenets belonging to his pestilential system he taught that children are born as pure as Adam was before the fall, denied the effect of the disobedience and fall of our first parents upon their posterity, claimed that men were sinners in such sense as to need only reformation in their conduct, that they could accomplish this by acquiring information as to their duty and properly exorcising the alleged freedom of their wills, and that when such performance was rendered there was merit in their works. These teachings were exposed by Augustine and others until they were condemned by the early Church. Indeed, they were supposed to have been destroyed root and branch. Such, however, was not the case. As

the Church became corrupt under the baneful influence of the growing papal hierarchy, pelagianism was tolerated and even fostered. In the beginning of the sixteenth century the Church was fearfully pelagianized. There was no generally felt sense of human depravity and human helplessness. The imaginary stock and surplus of human merit were bought and sold and stored away in unknown quantities. It became so abundant on earth that cargoes of it were shipped into a pelagian purgatory and placed to the account of suffering souls. Against this state of things the Reformers raised the battlecry of heaven, and buckled on the armor of God in defense of sound doctrine and in the advocacy of sovereign grace in the salvation of the sinner. The Heidelberg Catechism, the most Œcumenical confession of that reformatory age, took strong and positive ground against the deep-rooted and alarming evil. This attitude of the catechism appears already in Question 5, which teaches that man is "prone by nature (on account of the depravity of his nature) to hate God and his neighbor." In Questions 7 and 8 the source and extent of this depravity are set forth as "from the fall and disobedience of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in paradise; hence our nature is become so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin, and, therefore, wholly incapable of doing any good, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God."

This doctrine, as thus set forth in the Heidelberg Confession, the Reformed Church has zealously maintained and strenuously taught through all the stormy years and trying vicissitudes of its history. In this defense of the gospel it is frequently, if not constantly, found necessary to buffet the popular waves of pelagian sentiment in modern rationalism, as well as to oppose it in its old historic and Romish forms. So far as the Church has taken and maintains an attitude of opposition to the Roman hierarchy with all its heresies, immoralities and mummeries it is

### Positively Protestant.

It should not be understood, however, that the Reformed Church is Protestant in a mere negative sense. True Protestantism has positive principles for its contents. "Protestantism," says Dr. Schaff, "runs through the entire history of the Church." It was the purpose of the Reformers to save all that was essential to

the true faith in the old Catholic Church, as well as to remove radically whatever tended to work an abomination or make a lie. The fundamental principles of Protestantism taught in the Bible, from which there had been a departure, and of which there had been a perversion in the Romish Church, are reducible to two: First: The supremacy of God's Word over all the traditions and reasonings of men. Second: The sufficiency of God's grace without the assistance of human merit in accomplishing man's salvation. The first named of these two principles of Protestantism is plainly taught in Questions 3, 4, 21, 22, 65 and 67 of the catechism. The other, which is sometimes called the material principle, is the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith. This doctrine is forcibly expressed and consistently taught in Questions 60, 61, 62 and 63. Especially does the language of Question 63 ring out as over against the error of Romanism, as well as against all theories, teachings and practices of religious humanitarianism which the Reformed Church is bound constantly to oppose: God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ; inasmuch as I embrace such benefit with a believing heart.

### Is This Grace Irresistible?

Upon this question the catechism maintains a dignified silence. "These doctrines of grace," says Dr. J. H. Good, "have sometimes been overlaid with minute, metaphysical deductions of reason; and these have called forth opposition and produced a large number of sects." The Reformed Church is not a debating society, neither is the Reformed pulpit a rostrum for the discussion of such topics. But few Christians are able to answer all questions that may be sprung out of the general subject of the Divine Sovereignty in its relation to human freedom, and they generally belong to that ignorant and presumptuous class of mortals who rush in where angels either fear or fail to enter. One thing is certain. The Reformed Church does not teach that men may not receive the grace of God in vain. The five points in Calvinism, as they are sometimes called, such as the mooted questions of limited atonement, effectual calling and others that belong to the same cluster of mysteries, are wisely regarded as things that lie beyond the present horizon of the human intellect. The nearest approach to such deep things of God is found in the first and fifty-fourth questions. The "assured confidence" of the Christian that he belongs to his faithful Savior, and that he "ever shall remain a living member of a Church chosen to everlasting life," is his only and sufficient comfort in life and death. The true and devout child of the Reformed Church does not find his comfort so much in, or draw it so directly from any decree or eternal purpose that God had or may have had concerning his salvation, as from the clearly and fully manifested fact that this redemption has been wrought in Christ, and is now at hand in all its freeness and fullness for all who by faith become vitally united with him in his mystical body, the Church. Hence the proper stress laid upon that article of the Creed in which the believer confesses his faith in

# "THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH."

This article is not held as in the Romish sense which places the Church between Christ and the believer. Neither is the catechism in sympathy with the modern mere social theory

which tries to make room for the believer between Christ and the Church, while it holds the latter to be a mere aggregation of believers. The true Reformed position is Christ in the believer and the believer in Christ, and both in the Church as the mystical body of which he is the ever living head, and in which the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in the believer, takes the divine-human and glorified life of Christ and communicates it through the divinely ordained means of grace to those who make a proper use thereof, and who thus become assured that they are "very members incorporate, and heirs through hope of his everlasting kingdom, by the merits of his most blessed death and passion."

### THE WORD OF PREACHING.

Strictly speaking, it can not be said that the fundamental importance of preaching God's Word is a distinctive doctrine of the Reformed Church; and yet it is true that this Church through all its history has laid distinctive stress upon this divinely ordained means of grace and salvation. It does not attempt to explain the connection between the Word and the Spirit,

but to simply preach the Word in full assurance that the Holy Spirit's operations are connected with such preaching in such way and by such power as to work faith in the hearts of those who hear and heed the Divine message. It is held that "the Christian life is begotten in the believer by the Word of God, which is ever living, and carries in itself the power to quicken faith and love in the heart, by the Holy Ghost." Question 65 of the catechism is explicit and full upon this point. "The Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts through the preaching of the gospel." The catechism, here as at all other points, is fully fortified and authorized by the inspired Scriptures of the Word. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Rom. 10: 17.

### THE ORDAINED MINISTRY.

While the Reformed Church holds that the power of God unto faith and salvation is primarily in the Word or gospel preached, it also makes proper account of the ordination of ministers as an indispensable part of their full qualification for the work of preaching. "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear with-

out a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" Plenty of room is found and abundant encouragement is given in the Reformed Church for lay teaching and evangelistic work in Sunday-schools and other legitimate spheres of Christian activity, but not in such sense and to such an extent as to lower the regularly ordained ministry from its Scripturally authorized and distinctive position and It is held purpose in the Christian economy. that ordained ministers are ambassadors for Christ, and that they act in an official capacity. They pray and preach and beseech in Christ's stead. This implies an authority which even the most learned and pious layman does not possess and should not claim. Ordained and faithful ministers are regarded as "servants, messengers, heralds, watchmen of Christ, co-workers with God, preachers of the Word, and stewards of the mysteries of God. The doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers as over against all Romanizing tendencies to priestly power is not held in such sense as to obliterate the distinction between such universal priesthood and the ministerial office in the Church of Christ."

### THE GOSPEL SERMON.

The Church holds that the gospel sermon is something more than an ordinary presentation of the truth. This latter may be done in a learned discourse, theological essay or an address upon the beauties of morality. But a combination of all these would not be equivalent to a sermon in the sense that it is a message from God who is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. The sermon is designed as a message of authority. The true minister speaks as an ambassador commissioned by the King Immortal to negotiate, upon certain conditions, the treaty of peace with his rebellious subjects. In the name of heaven men are thus commanded to repent. Not to repent, when the kingdom of heaven and the King of heaven are thus at hand challenging obedience to the righteous mandate, is to despise, not only the messenger and the message, but also him who sends the messenger with such message of authority and grace for the purpose of saving rebellious man.

### THE PULPIT RESTORED.

In the Reformation the Church restored the

pulpit to its proper place in the economy of grace from which it had been removed by Romanism to give undue prominence to the Romish altar as the center of superstitious mummeries; and the Reformed Church still continues to maintain that the same old pulpit, as the representative of the prophetic function in the Christian ministry, the defender of the Christian faith and the Gibraltar of Protestantism, shall never again be removed. The danger now threatening from an opposite and additional source is equally great. The wideawake watchmen upon the walls of the Reformed Zion are not slow to discern the signs of the times. Rationalism and Unitarianism are fast drifting toward a point in history when they will attempt to sweep both pulpit and altar from the sanctuary of God to make room for a mere rostrum from which to proclaim a religion of reason, and a denial of anything and everything supernatural in the preaching of the Word and in

### THE HOLY SACRAMENTS.

The Reformed Church holds that the faith wrought in the heart of the believer by the preaching of the Word is strengthened or con-

firmed by the proper use of the visible tokens and pledges of the promises of the gospel usually called sacraments. During the long years of deepening degeneracy preceding the Reformation, the Romish tendency in the Church enlarged the list from two to seven. Toward the end of the twelfth century, after much discussion, confirmation, confession, extreme unction, ordination and marriage were included in the category. The Reformed Church, while admitting that some of these were sacred and beneficial rites, denied from the very beginning of its evangelical movement that they were sacraments according to the true and full idea thereof. This position it still maintains, not only as over against Rome, but also in opposition to the alleged discovery by some sects which admit feet washing and other needful things into the limited category of sacred ordinances. Question 68 of the catechism is very brief and clear upon this point. Our symbol of faith correctly assumes that no one but Christ, the Divine-human Head of the Church, has authority to institute sacraments in the "new covenant or testament," and then explicitly teaches that there are but two such,

namely, Holy Baptism and the Holy Supper. In Question 66 we have the Church's definition of sacraments. They are defined to be "holy visible signs and seals appointed of God for this end, that by the use thereof he may the more fully declare and seal to us the promise of the gospel."

The foregoing definition seems plain enough, and yet, until of late, there was no clear understanding in the Reformed Church in the United States as to just what was meant by the term "seal" as used in the form of sound words embraced in the catechism. Different modes of Christian thought led to different apprehensions of the meaning of God's Word. This freedom has always been tolerated in the broad and liberal spirit of the catechism. Hence the origin and existence in the Reformed Church, of different and differing schools of theology, and consequently different theories, each one of which saw its own side of the whole truth in a manner unfavorable to a fair and impartial view of the other side. This state of things not only stimulated the Church to seek more earnestly after the mind of the Spirit, but also, and above all, his guidance toward a deeper apprehension of the truth in all its wholeness. That earnest prayer of the Church was graciously answered. In 1878 it seemed good to the Holy Ghost to lead it out of the wilderness. The General Synod at its triennial session in Lancaster, Pa., initiated a series of measures "having for their object the reconciliation and adjustment of existing differences and difficulties in the Reformed Church." A commission was created to consider and solemnly deliberate over all matters in controversy with a view to amicable adjustment. This commission, after solemn and prayerful deliberation reported to the General Synod, convened in Tiffin, Ohio, during the year of jubilee, 1881. Its report was unanimously adopted. The Holy Spirit's guidance was probably never more manifest since the day of Pentecost. The hour of happy and authoritative deliverance was made more memorable in history by the general and spontaneous outgivings upgushings of gratitude and praise. The Reformed Church in the United States had reached a substantial agreement, not only as to the catechism's definition of a sacrament, but also upon other concomitant points involved in the earnest inquiry after the truth as it is in

Jesus. In that report, which by its adoption became the authoritative utterance of the Church, the following language is found: "We hold that in the use of the holy sacraments the grace signified by the outward signs is imparted to those who truly believe, but that those who come to these holy sacraments without faith, receive only the outward elements unto condemnation."

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

The truth as expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism—Questions 69-74—and held by the Reformed Church respecting holy baptism, lies between two common errors or opposite extremes. The one extreme or error is that which holds to baptismal regeneration in the sense that all persons externally baptized are consequently saved independently of any internal washing with the blood and Spirit of Christ. The other and opposite error views baptism as a mere sign. "This view" says Ursinus, who was one of the authors of the catechism, "separates things which ought not to be disjoined; for when we say that baptism is an external sign, we connect with it the thing signified. There is in baptism a double washing; an

external washing with water, an internal washing with the blood and Spirit of Christ. The internal is signified and sealed by that which is external, and is always joined with it in the proper use of baptism. This internal washing is again two-fold, being a washing with the blood and Spirit of Christ. Both are specified in the answer of the catechism, and may take place at the same time. To be washed with the blood of Christ is to receive the pardon of sin, or to be justified on account of his shedblood. To be washed with the Spirit of Christ, is to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, which consists in a change of evil inclinations into those which are good, which the Holy Ghost works in the will and heart, so as to produce in us hatred to sin and the desire to live according to the will of God."

THE FORM OR MANNER OF BAPTISM.

As stated in a preceding paragraph of this chapter, the Reformed Church lays distinctive stress upon the fact that Christianity as to its essential essence is grounded in life rather than in doctrine. It may be added in this connection that much less does our holy religion rest upon forms. It takes form according to the

law of the spirit of life in Christ, but builds neither its reality nor its efficacy upon such form. The catechism is very plain in setting forth the Divine authority for baptism, as well as the design and importance of the institution, but does not treat specifically of the manner in which it may be most properly administered. The custom of the Church has always been to apply the water to the subject rather than the subject to the water. It is felt that the custom of administering the believer to the sacrament does violence to the symbolic character of the institution in which "the blood of sprinkling" is applied to the washing away of sin. As the discussion of the mode of baptism does not come within the scope and purpose of this book, the reader is referred to the elaborate and excellent treatise upon the subject by Rev. J. J. Leberman, of Louisville, O.

### INFANT BAPTISM.

In full sympathy with Jesus Christ, its infallible source of authority, of whom the prophet bore witness that he should "sprinkle many nations," who himself said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," in full harmony with the general tenor of Scriptural teaching, and in accordance with the prevailing custom of Christendom in all ages, the Reformed Church holds that infants as well as adults are to be baptized. The reasons adduced for not excluding them from the benefits of this holy sacrament are given in Question 74 of the catechism. The blessedness of the provision made by the Divine Master, and set forth in the catechism as extending to the children of believers, is esteemed by members of the Church, and especially by parents, in proportion to their Christian intelligence and the correctness of their conception of God's covenant, with all that it includes in the way of promises and grace-bearing ordinances. certain uncertain drifts of sentiment infant baptism has not received due attention, such neglect of duty and slighting of privilege have not made the promises of God of none effect to those who have inherited the blessings and benefits thus conferred.

Biblical authority for infant baptism is denied by some. These are they who have come up to great controversy through servility to the letter, and infidelity to the Spirit of the Bible.

The same mode of deducing authority from the Word would leave the Church without warrant for its observance of the first day of the week as "We must have the Christian Sabbath. recourse," says Dr. Schaff, "to the spirit of the Bible which contains far more than is expressed by its letter; and if it thence appears that infant baptism is necessarily included in the very draft and design of primitive Christianity, we will be able in the total absence of proof to the contrary, to arrive at tolerable certainty that it was actually practiced. As the apostolic Church was a missionary Church, the most of those baptized into it were grown persons. Infant baptism has force and meaning only in the fact of a parent Church already existing, and the presumption of Christian education, which, of course, could not be expected of heathen or Jewish parents. Thus in our day, a missionary begins his work with the instruction of adults, not with the baptism of children."

"The long experience of the church," says Dr. J. H. Good, "has testified to the blessings of this sacred privilege, wherever it has been maintained in its purity. In all the dispensations of God, since the creation of the world, the children

of parents in covenant with God were expressly included in the privileges of the covenant. (Gen. 17: 7. Acts 2: 39). Our Savior never gave the slightest intimation that under the new and higher dispensation, which he introduced, this privilege was to be withdrawn. It is true that he did not command in express words that the children were to be received into covenant relation by baptism. But this was not neces-This was understood of itself. The privilege was not withdrawn. On the contrary he expressly invited the children to be brought to him. The children of believing parents are, therefore, not to be regarded as heathen, but are entitled to be members of the Church of Christ "

# THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The doctrinal position of the Reformed Church respecting the Lord's Supper distinguishes it, probably more than anything else, from Romanism and Lutheranism on the one hand, as well as from Rationalism and bald Spiritualism on the other. The history of these distinctions dates back to the time of the disagreement between Zwingli and Luther and their common disagreement with the Romish

Church as to the nature and design of this holy sacrament. The Roman Church held and still holds to transubstantiation, that is the change, by the priest, of the substance of the bread and wine in the Eucharist into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Of course this monstrous pretention was rejected by all the Reformers. Luther, however, held, and legitimate Lutheranism still holds, to consubstantiation, which, being interpreted, means that through the act of consecration by the minister, the body and blood of Christ is present in, with and under the bread and wine of the Sacrament. As stated in the preceding chapter of this book, this doctrine was rejected by Zwingli and other Reformers of Switzerland, and afterwards by Calvin, Melancthon and other distinguished Reformed theologians of that age. These different views of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper gave rise to the historic distinction between the Reformed Church and Lutheranism. Luther having persistently declined to acknowledge the existence of any truth outside of his own view of the subject, the point of divergency was reached with all the responsibility of the results that followed his schismatic action. For some time,

therefore, Zwingli was the recognized leader on the Reformed side in the controversy that seemed to threaten the very life of Protestantism in its cradle. At first he was not able to seize and hold the truth as pertaining to the Sacrament, in all its symmetrical wholeness. Calvin began where Zwingli left off. The Reformed doctrine respecting the Supper is sometimes and properly called the Calvinistic view. This it is in the sense that Calvin was the leading "theological organ by which it first came to that clear expression under which it was uttered subsequently" in the Reformed symbolical books of that century. Among those books is the Heidelberg Catechism. teachings upon the subject are Reformed or Calvinistic as over against the Lutheran doctrine, as well as in opposition to Romanism on the one hand and low Socinianism on the other.

The Lord's Supper is treated in the catechism under Questions 75–82 inclusive. This setting forth of Scriptural teaching upon the subject is all that could be reasonably desired. In these questions the Reformed Church speaks both its theology and its faith respecting the most fundamental facts and forces in the Christian

religion. Anyone wishing to be informed as to what the Reformed doctrine is, and to know whether it be of God, will only need to examine this portion of the catechism in its relation to the system of theology in which it stands, and in the light of the Scriptural proof-texts cited as conclusively authoritative upon the subject. Here we have an apple of gold in a picture of silver. The gold is absolutely pure; the silver is as free from dross as human language and human apprehension can be before the advent of absolute perfection. Throughout these questions "the two great aspects of the ordinance are carefully distinguished and just as carefully held together." The sacrifice of Christ once offered on the cross is kept centrally, clearly and constantly in view as the ground of pardon and peace to the believer; but at the same time a real union, by the Holy Ghost, with Christ in his present glorified state, is also emphasized as necessary to a saving communion with him unto everlasting life. The catechism does not teach that these truths may, can, or must be grasped and clearly comprehended by the power of the mind. Children are nourished on bread and milk without being able to

analyze the ingredients of either; neither need they understand the process by which such excellent food is prepared, through digestion, and converted into the nutrient parts of the blood for natural subsistence and growth. So with the children of the Lord at their Father's table. The important thing is that they be children by a heavenly birth of the Word, the Water and the Spirit. Such have faith to discern the Lord's body. The Reformed Church holds that they may, with an assured confidence, take part in the celebration of the Lord's Supper as the inmost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship, bind themselves anew with this pledge of his living union and fellowship with them to the end of time, while each one is permitted to comfort his ransomed soul with the excellent promise of being raised up at the last day.

The following will include the distinctive points in the doctrine of this Sacrament as held by the Reformed Church:

- I. Its proper observance is *commemorative* of Christ's suffering and death on the cross.
- 2. "Further," it is a means of grace in the proper use of which Christ feeds and nour-

ishes the believer's soul unto everlasting life.

- 3. In this Sacrament or Sacramental transaction as a means of grace, *Christ is spiritually yet really present* as the Fountain of the grace which he communicates to believing participants.
- 4. The believing communicant partakes of Christ's crucified body and shed blood as assuredly as he receives from the hands of the minister and tastes with the mouth the bread and cup of the Lord as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.
- 5. The *organ* through which the communicant partakes of Christ's crucified body and shed blood *is*, not the mouth of the body of the communicant, but *faith*, which is the mouth of the new creature in Christ Jesus.
- 6. "Also, besides that," the believing communicant thus becomes more and more united to Christ's sacred body.
- 7. This strengthening of the vital bond between Christ and the communing believer is by the Holy Ghost who dwells both in Christ and those who are "flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone."
  - 8. The Lord's Supper was instituted only for

those who are truly sorrowful for their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven for the sake of Christ; who look to him for righteousness and salvation; who abide in the fellowship of his church, and earnestly desire to possess his Spirit and walk in his ways.

- 9. All those who come to this Sacrament without faith receive only the outward elements unto condemnation.
- by profession and life to be *infidels and ungodly*, receive the greater condemnation, profane the covenant of God and give occasion for the wrath of God to be kindled against the whole congregation when such unworthy ones are not excluded by

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

This term was used by Christ (Matthew 16: 19), and there is, therefore, authority for its proper use in the catechism. It means the Church's authority from Christ to do certain things in his name. The power of the keys is Christ's power. It is "he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." This power may and should be exercised by the Church only in accordance

with the provisions of the heavenly charter under which it is thus conditionally granted. This authority revokes itself in any attempt to go contrary to its provisions and beyond its limitations. The Reformed Church calls it the power of the keys because as keys are used to open and shut a door, so by the proper use of this power the kingdom of heaven is opened for the worthy and shut against the unworthy. This power is exercised by preaching the holy God's kingdom of grace is thus opened and openly witnessed to believers, that when they accept with true faith the promises of the gospel, all their sins are forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ's merits, and that they have an evangelical right to the tree of life and to all the blessings of God's everlasting kingdom. This power is also exercised when in the preaching of the gospel it is proclaimed and openly witnessed to all unbelievers that they are excluded from the kingdom of grace and left under the wrath of God so long as they are not converted. It is also further exercised by Church discipline in excluding such as hold false doctrines and lead wicked lives from the communion of the Christian Church, and

thereby God himself excludes all such from the kingdom of Christ.

REGENERATION: CONVERSION.

As the Reformation itself was, under one view, a new birth, a putting off the old man and a putting on the new, so the Reformed Church teaches the necessity of the new birth for each individual. The regenerated man does not by such change become another creature, but a new creature in Christ Jesus. In conversion the man does not say good-bye to himself and then turn to salute another self. While he puts off the old man with his deeds and puts on the new man, he remains the same as to the identity of his personal being, even as the Reformed or renewed Church remains the same Church that was born on the Day of Pentecost, and to which the Savior promised perpetuity, and protection against the gates of hell.

The Reformed Church holds to regeneration in a sense that will not permit of its being placed in a category with a mere change of opinion, moral reform, legal obedience and the spontaneous upgushings of emotional exhuberance. The catechism is everywhere intoned with better music, and bases all its teachings

upon a deeper conception of the new birth. It is held in harmony with the doctrine of *educational-religion*. By this term it is not meant that persons become Christians through the power or process of education in the sense of intellectual discipline or accumulation of knowledge, but that those who have been planted in the house of the Lord may, by Christian nurture or education, flourish in the courts of their God. This presupposes that in such there is something to nourish, educate and unfold which did not receive its birth of the flesh. Thus they grow up, not into, but *in* the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The Catechism is very plain and emphatic in teaching both the necessity and the doctrine of the new birth. Already in the 8th question it shows that we are so corrupt as to be wholly incapable of doing any good, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God. Question 20 teaches that all men perished in Adam, and that only those can be saved who are ingrafted into Christ. In Question 71 it is held to be the teaching of Christ that the believer is as certainly washed by his blood and spirit as he is washed with the water of baptism. According to Ques-

tion 73 the Holy Ghost calls baptism the "washing of regeneration" and the washing away of sins. In line with the foregoing teachings of the Catechism the 88th Question treats conversion as something so deep in its nature and so thorough in its workings as to define it "the mortification of the old man and quickening of the new man." This quickening of the new man gives rise to the possibility of

### EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION.

It is still occasionally asked by some ignorant and presumptuous people whether the Reformed Church believes in experimental religion. To which question for the last time we answer, yes; but not in the sense that it is something to be experimented with, neither in the way that religion is dreamed of by inflated fanatics. Their conception and knowledge of experimental piety are too wonderful. The Church of Martyrs, and modesty cannot attain thereto. Its holiest men (Q. 114), while in this life have only small beginnings of obedience. They only begin to live according to all the commandments.

The Reformed Church holds that the Christian life is something broader and deeper than its manifestation in conscious experience.

The joyous experience of the Christian is like the fragrance of the rose: Its chief value consists in the fact that it indicates the nature of the flower and the garden from which such fragrancies proceed. Questions 58 and 90 of the Catechism bring out the correct doctrine upon this point. There is no uncertain sound in the language by which the true member of the Church may speak of the hope that is within him. "I now feel in my heart the beginning of eternal joy." "The quickening of the new man is a sincere joy of heart in God through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in such good works which proceed from a true faith and are performed according to

#### THE LAW OF GOD.

For this reason the consideration of the decalogue in detail is reserved for the third part of the Catechism which treats of the effects of grace in the life of the regenerated man. In the first part simply the sum of the law (Q. 4) is employed to "bring its scattered rays to a burning focus" for the purpose of producing a knowledge of sin; in the third part it is used as the rule of Christian obedience. There is a Divine thought as well as a logical order in this ar-

rangement. When the man is changed by conversion his relation to the law is also changed. The Reformed Church looks upon its true members as having passed from slavery to freedom; from fear to joy. Instead of hearing the law from Mount Sinai they may hear it from Mount Zion, and delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man. The true child of the Reformed Church is led through the obedience of faith to a new life of joyous gratitude. He therefore tells his experience by showing forth the praise of him who hath redeemed him from all the power of the devil. This is accompanied by and accomplished in

#### PRAYER.

The Reformed Church holds that strictly Christian prayer is possible only for Christians. It is defined by the Catechism (Q. 116) as the chief part of thankfulness, and enjoined as necessary to a continuance of grace and the Holy Spirit in the believer. Thus prayer in the Reformed view is both a means and a fruit of grace. In the character of the latter it reaches toward perfection, and ultimately culminates where

"Hope shall change to glad fruition, Faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

# CHAPTER III.

## GOVERNMENT.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT IN GENERAL.

LL proper Church government derives its authority from Christ who is the only Head of the Church. While this truth is acknowledged by all Protestants, there is not an exact agreement as to the most Scriptural manner of receiving, holding and exercising this derived authority. Hence we have the Episcopal, the Presbyterial and the Independent orders. The latter is here mentioned only in brief, since it is seriously questioned by some whether it be an order or a disorder of Church government. The Episcopal order of government is a modified hierarchy. Its prelates claim to stand in the most direct line of apostolic succession. They, therefore, lay their hands on things by an authority not exclusively their own. Its advocates pretend that there is a real distinction between a "bishop" and a

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"presbyter;" that bishops are immensely superior to presbyters, and that, therefore, they are the bishops. The Presbyterial order is held by a large number of Protestants in distinction from papal and Episcopal on the one hand, and Independency or Congregationalism on the other. The term *presbyterial* is derived from the Greek word for *elders*. According to Scripture it, therefore, means a government by elders. These elders are of two classes, viz: those who labor in Word and doctrine and are called *ministers*, and such as rule only and are called simply *elders*.

### THE PRESBYTERIAL ORDER.

The Reformed Church holds that the system of government most conformable in its essential features to Scriptural authority and early historical precedent is the *presbyterial*. This term does not mean just the same as presbyterian. The presbyterial order of Church government is older than the Presbyterian Church. The Swiss Reformers drew their principles of Church government, as they did their theology, from the Holy Scriptures, and began to apply them more than a hundred years before the Presbyterian Church was organized. The Presbyter-

ians, therefore, found their excellent order of government already in practical operation where they had their distinct denominational origin, in the Reformed Church.

Presbyterialism assumes and emphasizes the fact that there are two factors, divine and human, in Church government proper. It also holds that these two factors or elements are most properly related, proportioned and balanced when held and exercised presbyterially. While it gives Christ the pre-eminence, and acknowledges him as the supreme source of all ecclesiastical authority, it consistently maintains that this government is by his Word and Spirit, and that his governing Spirit is in the Church influencing and bearing witness with the spirits of believers, thus making God's government of the people a government by the people. In harmony with this teaching, it holds that Christ's governing Spirit dwells, not exclusively in an alleged papal head, neither in prelatic dignitaries only, but in all the members of his body, the Church.

The Reformed Church, both in Europe and America, was peculiarly fortunate in having men of marked administrative ability among its organizers. Of these we may mention Lasco, Calvin, Lambert, Olevianus, and Michael From the beginning, the Reformed Schlatter. Church in every part of Europe was governed by ministers and elders chosen by the congregation, while the Lutherans were generally governed by superintendents appointed by the prince. As early as the year 1526, the presbyterial order presented by Lambert of Avignon, was adopted at the Synod of Homberg and introduced into the Reformed Church of Hesse. The historian Ranke says: "The features of it are the same as those in which the French, the Scotch and the American Churches were afterwards established." There was also, as to-day, a regular series of Church courts constituting a system of government. Though this system has been somewhat modified to meet the circumstances of the times, it is still the same as to its general features. "This order of government," says Dr. J. H. Good, "is Biblical, efficient, simple, and favorable to the rights of all, both members and ministers."

#### THE CONSTITUTION.

The presbyterial order of government is set forth revised and in full in the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. This constitution is believed to be in harmony with the teachings of God's Word, and has been ordained by the Church to be its fundamental law for government, doctrine and cultus, and to have binding authority on all its members, congregations, assemblies and courts.

## MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

According to the constitution, all baptized persons under the care of the Church are members thereof, and subject to its government and discipline. All persons received into the full communion of the Church, whether by confirmation or on certificate, are entitled to all its rights and privileges. Members in good and regular standing in other Protestant Churches who apply for membership in a Reformed congregation, and who for some reason are not able to procure certificates, may be received by a renewal of their profession after such examination and in such manner as the spiritual council decides most proper in each case. It is enjoined upon members moving from one congregation to another to obtain a certificate of dismissal to the congregation into whose bounds they move. Such certificate is valid one year.

The Reformed Church expects of its members that they lead godly lives, be active in promoting the prosperity of the brotherhood, give special heed to the welfare of their own families, obey the laws and rules of life prescribed in the Word of God and in the Constitution and enactments of the assemblies, assist by appropriating a sufficient portion of their means for the support of the gospel, be constant worshipers at home and in the house of God, and that those in full membership see to it that they show forth the Lord's death until he come.

## THE CONGREGATION.

A congregation in the Reformed Church is a body of Christian people receiving the Heidelberg Catechism as its standard of faith and doctrine. It is required of the congregation that as soon as organized it shall adopt a constitution and procure a charter, both of which shall be subject to approval by the classis within whose bounds it is located, in agreement with each other, and in accordance with the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States. Each congregation elects its own elders and deacons who constitute the consistory, which by the charter is constituted

also the Board of Trustees. To the consistory, as a Board of Trustees, are committed the care and control of the property of the congregation, which they hold as a sacred trust, keep in proper repair, and use for proper purposes. The congregation is either the whole or a part of a pastoral charge. The charge elects and calls its own pastor. Such pastor-elect may accept the call subject to the approval of and installation by classis. When thus regularly settled in a charge, the minister may remain as pastor of that people so long as their relation to each other is mutual and classis deems expedient.

#### CHURCH OFFICES.

The offices in the Reformed Church are:

- I. The Office of Minister of the Word.
- 2. The Office of Professor of Theology.
- 3. The Office of Elder.
- 4. The Office of Deacon.

## MINISTERS OF THE WORD.

A minister of the Word is a member of the Church, called of Christ, and by the laying on of presbyterial hands and prayer, ordained and

consecrated to the ministry of reconciliation, to preach the gospel, dispense the holy sacraments, administer Christian discipline, and to be set apart to the service of Christ in his Church as long as he lives.

When called by a charge and installed by a classis a minister becomes the pastor of such charge. As pastor it is his duty to be an example to believers, teach them to observe all divinely commanded things, feed that particular flock of God, keep a complete Church Register of all his ministerial acts in the charge and present a written parochial and full statistical report of his labors to classis at each annual meeting thereof.

If compelled by age or infirmity to retire from the active duties of his office, the minister, nevertheless, retains a seat and vote in his classis and synod, and the right to perform ministerial acts within certain specified restrictions.

All ministers are upon an official equality. The Reformed Church recognizes no two-fold or three-fold order in the ministry of Christ. All are teaching elders; all are presbyters; and all unite in denying by Scriptural authority the

presumptuous claim of diocesan episcopacy to an exclusive divine right in ecclesiastical polity, and the alleged official superiority of bishops over other ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

## Professors of Theology.

A Professor of Theology in the Reformed Church is a minister of the Word elected and inaugurated as a professor in a theological institution. His views must be in accord with the faith and doctrine of the Church, and himself in full approval of its mode of government, forms of worship and distinctive customs. Before he enters upon the duties of his professorial office he is inaugurated under the direction of the synod or body choosing him. At his inauguration he is required to make a public and solemn affirmation of his faith and purpose in accordance with the provisions of the constitution.

It is the duty of such professors to explain the Holy Scriptures and defend the pure doctrine of the gospel against errors. In their instruction to theological students they are to make it their chief aim to acquaint such students with the true sense of the sacred Scriptures, and prepare them to preach the gospel with power and effect. To this end they are severally required to give instruction in *Exegetical*, *Historical*, *Dogmatic*, and *Practical* Theology.

A professor in a Reformed Seminary continues in office during his life, unless he becomes disqualified for its duties by falling into heterodoxy or vice, or by physical or mental infirmity. Faithful professors, having spent their best days performing the duties of their office, may not be displaced without provisions for their support as their necessities may require and the synod able to make.

#### ELDERS AND DEACONS.

A ruling elder is a member chosen by a congregation to assist and support the pastor in the spiritual affairs of the Church. He is ordained to his office by the pastor in the laying on of hands and prayer. The number of elders or deacons in a congregation, as well as the term of years for which they are chosen at any one election, is determined by the constitution of such congregation. It is the duty of elders to aid the pastor in visiting the sick, and contribute according to their ability toward the instruction, improvement and consolation of the members. They are expected to be earnestly

devoted to the service of Christ. Elders and deacons are ordained to their respective offices for life.

A deacon is a member chosen by a congregation to gather and disburse the alms and other offerings of the people. The law established for elders applies also to the election, ordination and installation of deacons. It is the duty of deacons to provide for the support of the pastor, look after the poor and destitute, see that the charities of the congregation are wisely applied, procure the outward elements for the Lord's Supper, and maintain order in the house of God. It is required of the deacons, as well as of the elders, that they be exemplary in life and conduct according to Acts 6: 1–6, and I. Tim. 3; 8-13.

#### LICENTIATES.

A licentiate is a student of theology licensed to preach the gospel. Such license may be granted by either a classis or a synod after the applicant therefor has furnished good and satisfactory evidence that he is possessed of all the necessary qualifications for the high position sought. In the examination of such applicants particular attention is paid by the Reformed

Church to their evidences of unquestionable piety, the purity of their intentions in seeking the holy ministry, their orthodoxy and their ability to teach. As a rule such persons must have completed the full course of study prescribed for the Theological Seminary. If the examination of an applicant for license to preach the gospel be regarded as satisfactory, he is supplied with a certificate after having first attested his adherence to the Reformed Church in the United States in its doctrines and discipline by publicly reading aloud before classis or synod and subscribing the following formula:

"I, one of the undersigned, hereby testify, that I honestly and truly accept the doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism as in accordance with the Word of God, and promise, moreover, faithfully to preach and defend the same. I, also, declare and promise, that I will carefully observe and comply with all the ordinances which now are, or may hereafter, be enacted by the authorities of the Church; and, also, that I will cheerfully and readily receive and submit to all their admonitions and decisions so long as I remain in connection with the Reformed Church.

"In testimony whereof, I hereby inscribe my name, the day and year written opposite to it."

Name. — — Date.

A licentiate is permitted, under certain restrictions, to preach the Word; but shall

neither administer the sacraments, perform the rite of confirmation, pronounce the benediction, nor solemnize marriages. If not less than twenty-one years of age and having received an appointment as a missionary, or as a professor in an authorized theological institution of the Church, or a call to a pastoral charge, he may be ordained.

#### CHURCH ASSEMBLIES.

The Church assemblies are:

- I. The Consistory.
- 2. The Spiritual Council.
- 3. The Classis.
- 4. The Synod.
- 5. The General Synod.

These five constitute an ascending series of assemblies for the government of the Church at every point, carefully balancing its authority in such a manner as to combine freedom with unity. Here the rights of all are easily conserved, since no one's rights can be in conflict with the rights of others or out of agreement with the righteous government of the whole body, even as the latter is subject to the law of the spirit of life in Christ.

Each one of these assemblies in the Reformed

Church contains in itself *legislative*, *judicial* and *executive* functions, which may be exercised with its action subject to review and approval by the next higher assembly. When sitting in the exercise of judicial power the assemblies are church courts.

#### THE CONSISTORY.

The pastor or pastors, the elders and the deacons of a congregation constitute its consistory, to which the general oversight and government of the organization are committed. It is the privilege and duty of the consistory to elect delegates, *primarius* and *secondus*, to represent the charge in the higher assemblies of the Church. In calling a minister and in all matters of general interest, the consistory determines nothing conclusively without the consent of a majority of the members of the congregation or charge.

#### THE SPIRITUAL COUNCIL.

The pastor and the acting elders constitute the spiritual council to administer the spiritual affairs of the congregation. It is the duty of this council to watch over the members of the congregation, guard the doctrines of Christ, admit members to full communion, exclude therefrom any who may be found to have erred from the faith or offended in morals, and furnish members in good and regular standing who may apply for dismissal, with certificates to any other orthodox Protestant Church.

#### CLASSIS.

This term means nearly the same as presbytery in the Presbyterian branch of the Reformed Church. Classis consists of the ministers residing within a district designated by the synod, and of the elders delegated by the pastoral charges situated within these limits, and has jurisdiction over said ministers and pastoral charges. After religious services at the opening of its annual session, classis reconstitutes itself for the work of the year by the election of a president and other officers necessary for the proper transaction of its business. At these annual meetings classis receives parochial reports from the ministers within its bounds pertaining to their labors during the past year and the state of morals and religion in their respective charges, and hears statements by the delegated elders upon any matter that pertains to the affairs of the charges they respectively

represent. Upon the basis of information thus obtained a report on the state of religion is made by the classis to the synod within whose bounds it is situated.

The Constitution of the Church invests each classis with the power to examine and license students of theology, ordain licentiates, constitute or dissolve pastoral relations, dismiss ministers and licentiates, depose or otherwise discipline according to his desert a member of its own body, and reinstate, upon trustworthy evidence of repentance and reformation, a minister whom it has suspended or deposed. A classis may review congregational records, hear and decide all cases of reference, complaint and appeal, as well as all questions respecting ministers or congregations, which may arise within its jurisdiction, and are regularly brought before it.

It is also the duty of classis to act on all such matters as are handed down for that purpose by the synod, and upon all ordinances and constitutional amendments that have been approved and referred by the General Synod; to elect delegates to the higher assemblies, and through its stated clerk furnish synod and the General Synod with a certified copy of all its proceedings

subject to review by or having reference to these higher assemblies.

#### THE SYNOD.

A synod is composed of four or more adjacent classes. It meets annually, either in convention or as a delegated body. If in convention, it consists of all its ministers and one elder from each pastoral charge; if as a delegated body, it consists of the ministers and elders chosen by its classes, according to a basis of representation adopted by itself. The annual sessions are opened with divine service, after which the organization is effected and the business transacted according to the rules of order prescribed by the General Synod.

A synod has jurisdiction over the classes of which it is composed similar to that which the classis has over the consistories within its bounds. This jurisdiction includes power to examine and license students of theology, ordain licentiates, hear and determine complaints and appeals, establish new classes within its own limits, and determine all controversies between classes, and between ministers and congregations of two or more classes. It may establish and maintain colleges and other lit-

erary institutions, and with the consent of General Synod, establish a Theological Seminary. A synod may also establish and maintain a Board of Publication, whose particular purpose shall be the publication and sale of church papers and religious books. To the synod also pertains the duty of educating pious young men for the gospel ministry, as well as prosecuting the cause of church extension and the work of home and foreign missions.

#### GENERAL SYNOD.

This body is the general assembly of the first born Church of the Reformation. It represents the whole Church, and is composed of ministers and elders delegated by classes. The ratio of representation is fixed by the constitution. It is the highest court and the last resort on all questions concerning the government, doctrine and cultus of the Church.

The General Synod meets triennially and opens its sessions and transacts its business in a manner similar to that prescribed for the synod. It reviews the proceedings of the synods, determines complaints and appeals, and may maintain correspondence with sister Churches.

Through boards elected for that purpose it has the general management of the work of home missions and foreign missions, and may, when deemed necessary, examine into the doctrine, cultus and management of any one or all of the Theological Seminaries of the Reformed Church in the United States. Furthermore, all proposed ordinances or changes in the ordinances of the Church, such as the constitution, a catechism, a hymnbook, and a liturgy, must be approved by the General Synod. Such action of approval must, however, be submitted to all the classes for final approval, after which the proposed ordinance or change of ordinance has binding authority in the whole Church unless negatived by more than one-third of all the classes.

#### DISCIPLINE.

Christian discipline is the exercise of the authority and the application of those laws which Christ has established in his Church, to preserve its purity and honor, and promote the spiritual welfare of its members. The following includes all the points of primary importance pertaining to the discipline of the Reformed Church in the United States:

- I. Its discipline is spiritual. Nothing is admitted as matter of accusation, or considered an offense which can not be proved to be such from the Scriptures or the regulations of the Church, which are founded upon Scriptural authority.
- 2. The following sins especially claim the attention of the Church Courts and merit discipline: Heresy, blasphemy, schism, perjury, fornication, adultery, fraud, contentiousness, intemperance, gross profanation of the Lord's Day, and any other offenses against the Ten Commandments.
- 3. Discipline is exercised by admonition, censure, erasure of names, suspension, deposition and excommunication.
- 4. All members of the Church, confirmed or unconfirmed, and all ministers, elders and deacons are subject to discipline.
- 5. Judicial proceedings against persons charged with being offenders can be instituted only on accusation of a communicant member, or a judicatory finding it necessary to investigate an offense.
- 6. Prosecution in personal matters is not allowed, unless those means for reconciliation

have been tried, which are required by our Lord, Matthew 18: 15–17.

- 7. Trials are conducted in open or secret session as the court may determine.
- 8. In the examination of witnesses and presentation of the law and the evidence, the rules of the common-law courts are followed as nearly as possible.
- 9. All persons of sufficient intelligence, whether parties or otherwise, are competent witnesses, except such as do not believe in the existence of God, or a future state of rewards and punishments.
- nember, suspension or deposition of a minister, elder or deacon from office, is valid, except by concurrence of two-thirds of the members of the judicatory voting, and the announcement of the decision and passing of the sentence by the president in open court.
- 11. Any member of the Church, in good and regular standing, has the right of complaint against private individuals, Church officers and Church judicatories.
  - 12. Such complaints must be made and

disposed of according to the directions of the constitution.

- 13. The decision of a court in a case of complaint, or in a judicial case, may be appealed to the next higher court.
- 14. Such appeals must be based upon stated reasons which the constitution recognizes as good and sufficient. They must also be made, heard and decided in the manner prescribed by the constitution.
- 15. Members of the Church, deacons, elders and licentiates who are under discipline may be reinstated when the evidence of their repentance and amendment is satisfactory.
- 16. A minister deposed for any offense that affixes a public scandal to his character, which no after-repentance can remove, may not be reinstated; and in no case is a minister's reinstatement final until it is approved by synod.

## CHAPTER IV.

## CULTUS AND CUSTOMS.

THE TRUE IDEA AND MEANING OF CULTUS.

THE term cultus in Reformed literature and usage expresses the full idea of Christian worship. Heathens, Jews and Mohammedans worship, but their worship is not cultus. Cultus includes that worship which is made possible by, and in which the soul of the Christian co-operates with those heavenly powers which, through the incarnation of Christ and the gift of the Holy Ghost, are brought unto him and into him, and made to surround him in the covenant of grace. This, of course, implies an order of life with factors and forces not found in the world as naturally constituted. Whether we call it the kingdom, the covenant or the Church of God, it is a real community with members, means and powers at hand for the accomplishment of the purpose for which it was ordained. This order of life includes all time, and with expanding portals makes room for every age, and all the proper relations of life. It embraces the Christian family, including the little ones of believers in this fellowcitizenship with the saints. "Else were your children unclean but now are they holy." Infant baptism is recognitiatory of this holy covenant relation, as well as the sacrament of their admittance into the Christian Church. Starting with a recognition of such a blessed relation in the Christian family, the whole order of Christian cultus is but one grand system of supernatural powers and devout doings culminating in the proper observance of the Lord's Supper as the inmost sanctuary of the whole Christian worship.

#### PRIVATE DEVOTION.

The Reformed Church has always laid stress upon the importance of personal piety. The individual Christian does not belong to the communion of saints in such sense as to lose his individuality in a general aggregation of believers. Emphasis is laid upon the fact that each member of Christ's body holds communion by the Holy Ghost directly with his Savior. The Lord is *liis* shepherd. This relation is the

ground of private devotion and the encouragement thereto. Hence the Master's command to enter into the closet and shut the door. Those who thus wait upon the Lord renew their spiritual strength. No Christian can expect to be rewarded openly who is not seen of the Father in secret.

## FAMILY RELIGION.

The reward obtained in private devotion is openly manifested first in the Christian family. There is no richer blessing on earth than the possession of a pious household. The vials of Divine wrath are never emptied with more terrible rebuke than when Jehovah pours out his fury upon the families that call not upon his Happy is the parent who can say with the Apostle John: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth." To walk in the truth, children must be instructed therein. This is a part of that nurture and admonition of the Lord enjoined by the Apostle Paul. It is accompanied with family worship, which is commended by the constitution of the Church, urged from every pulpit, practiced in the holiest and happiest families,

and belongs to that grand system of educational religion which is carried forward in

## THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

For more than three hundred years the Reformed Church has advocated Sunday-schools by practically engaging in the blessed work; and it is now quite pleasurable to notice and to note the fact that Protestant Churches generally are following the good example. The Heidelberg Catechism is an old Sunday-school book. Next to the Bible it is the Church's book of "instruction in righteousness." As such it was at a very early date arranged into fifty-two lessons corresponding with the number of Sundays in the year.

The Sunday-school in the Reformed Church is regarded as an organic part of the Church, and its doings a very important part of the Church's most reasonable service. The Sunday-school is one of the educational institutions of the Church. Its primary mission is, not to supersede, but to supplement and co-operate with the Christian family in bringing up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and as far as practicable serve as a nursing mother in families that are not Chris-

tian. The service usually consists of singing, prayer, responsive Scripture readings, repetition of the Apostle's Creed, study of the Word, almsgiving, distribution of religious literature, closing with the Lord's Prayer in which all are urged to unite in a unison of devout hearts and, as far as possible, a harmony of cultured voices. In this way the work of the school ranks in comparative importance with

#### CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION.

"As the Reformed Church of Switzerland," says Dr. Harbaugh, "produced the first Reformed catechism, so to it belongs also the honor of taking the lead in introducing the catechetical system into the Reformed Church generally." This system is still in practice in the Reformed Church in the United States. Its superior excellency is valued by pastors and congregations in exact proportion to their acquaintance with the distinctive cultus of the Church, and their respect for its time-honored customs. Catechetical instruction as imparted in the Reformed Church, avoiding formality on the one hand and mere religious sentimentalism on the other, aims to build the catechumen

upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone in whom all the building is fitly framed together. Such catechization begins and proceeds upon the assumption that baptized children have already been engrafted into the church, and are, therefore, to be prepared for membership in full communion. As soon as they are old enough and sufficiently advanced in knowledge to understand the nature and realize the binding sanctity of religious obligations, they are formed into classes for instruction in Christian doctrine and duty according to the Word of God as systematized and simplified in the catechism. Into these classes unbaptized persons are also invited and admitted with a view to their conversion and baptism. Such catechization involves the preaching of the gospel in form and manner best adapted to the capacity of the hearers and their respective relations to the kingdom of God thus at hand and thus offered with all its saving powers. If, by the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, through the faithful instructions of the minister, any of them give evidence that the truth has made a proper impression upon their minds and hearts, they are admitted by the spiritual council to

#### CONFIRMATION.

The Reformed Church retains confirmation, not as a sacrament, but as a solemn and beneficial rite. It is always preceded by an audible and public profession of faith on the part of each catechumen. After reverently presenting themselves, the minister addresses them upon the general nature of the rite about to be administered, and then continues according to the Directory of Worship:

Dost thou now, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow made in thy name at thy baptism? Dost thou ratify and confirm the same, and acknowledge thyself bound to believe and to do all those things which thy parents undertook for thee?

Ans. I do.

Dost thou renounce the devil with all his ways and works, the world with its vain pomp and glory, and the flesh with all its sinful desires?

Ans. I do.

Profess now your faith before God and this congregation.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only begotten Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into

hades; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

Then follows confirmation proper, which consists in prayer and the laying on of hands by the minister. The persons confirmed are thus formally consecrated to the service of Christ.

The practicing of this religious rite is fully warranted by examples on record both in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. It was first observed by devout parents upon their children, whereby they imparted unto them the parental blessing, and confirmed them in faith and piety. Gen. 48: 14. By the laying on of hands also such as were called to the public ministry in the Church were invested with the authority and grace of the sacred office. Num. 27: 22, I. Tim. 4: 14. So also by the same solemn act, the apostles communicated the gift of the Holy Ghost for the confirmation of believers after their baptism. Acts 19: 5-6. Indeed, so generally was this rite practiced among God's most devout people that it was classed by the writer to the Hebrew with those doctrines of Christ which involved the "first principles" of his religion. Heb. 6: 2.

#### Public Worship.

Public worship in the Reformed Church is primarily neither an exercise nor an entertainment, but a most reasonable service, in which all things are done unto edifying, while the hearts of the worshipers are lifted up unto the Lord. It blends the freedom of the gospel with obedience to the law of harmony. Combining simplicity with all that is orderly and truly grand in devotion, the Reformed Church avoids wild confusion on the one hand and all pretentious display on the other, while it aims, "as in all the Churches of the saints," to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Day service consists of an invocation, singing of a hymn or psalm, reading of the Scriptures, prayer, singing of another hymn or psalm, sermon, prayer, giving of alms, singing, doxology and benediction. These services are conducted according to the Directory, which, not only prescribes full forms for all sacramental occasions, but also provides a full

service and a partial one for the public worship of God on the Lord's Day. While free prayer is allowed by those who prefer it, no order of worship may be observed, and no selection of hymns used, unless approved or recommended by the General Synod.

During the time of prayer in the usual service of the sanctuary, the congregation observes the standing attitude. The few exceptions to this rule may be classed with the infirm, the indolent or the apish.

### FESTIVAL DAYS.

The chief festivals of the Church are Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. These days or seasons are usually observed, and with great spiritual benefit by those who religiously improve them by a thoughtful and devout study of the leading and saving events in the life of Christ, upon whose person and work the whole of the Christian's salvation depends. The public and religious observances of these festival periods are sometimes either preceded or followed by a series of special services which are not unfrequently seasons of genuine revival in the congregation, and also occasions of

ingathering from the world under the preaching of the gospel.

## THE PRAYER-MEETING.

When circumstances permit, and when other duties do not prevent, the congregations of the Reformed Church are wont to observe stated seasons of social prayer. In these meetings devotion and sociality combine their sacred powers for the mutual benefit of all. These services are usually opened and led by the pastor or some other person able to edify. They are enjoyed and encouraged in proportion to the genuine spirituality of the congregation. Two or three harmoniously assembled in the name of Christ have the promise of the Divine presence and blessing.

## SACRAMENTAL RULES AND CUSTOMS.

The possibility and acceptability of all truly Christian worship depend upon the covenant relation of the worshiper to God. Hence the stress laid by the Reformed Church upon the use and the proper use of the sacraments. These holy visible signs and seals appointed of God are not administered indiscriminately by any means. The proper conditions are insisted

upon. These conditions are called for by the very nature and design of the sacraments in order to be of spiritual benefit to those who make use thereof.

Children are baptized upon the faith and vows of Christian parents or those whom the Constitution recognizes as qualified sponsors. A child may be admitted to baptism when either one of its parents is a member of the Church, but if neither of them be such, it must remain for the present unbaptized, unless there be an expressed desire and promise on the part of at least one of the parents to unite with the Church at the very earliest opportunity. Except for good and sufficient reasons, baptism is administered publicly in the Church.

The Lord's Supper is administered in each congregation at least twice a year. The communicants reverently surround the chancel by companies or groups, and while in a standing attitude receive the outward elements from the hands of the minister.

A preparatory service is held, usually on the preceding day, and the names of the communicants recorded. It is the duty of all members to be prepared for this solemn service, and all

are admitted thereto, except such as are excluded by the spiritual council for having departed from the faith, doctrine or practice of the Church.

Members in good standing in other denominations holding the essential doctrines of the gospel, are invited to unite in the observance of this holy ordinance. The pastor or elders of the Church may convey the consecrated elements to those of the congregation whose infirmity or sickness prevents them from going to the house of God.

# CHRISTIAN BURIAL.

Members of the Church, having departed this life in the faith and hope of the gospel, are honored with a Christian burial. In arranging for the funeral the pastor is consulted as to the time most convenient to himself and most proper under all the circumstances for the observance of the solemn rites. The undertaker is next seen and the friends are then informed authoritatively as to the hour and place for the service. In this way all confusion is avoided. This excellent rule is observed in all the considerate families of the Reformed Church.

The burial service is conducted according to the Directory of Worship, which provides for a short sermon or exhortation. The sermon usually contains some words of comfort to those who sorrow not as others who have no hope. Reference to exemplary traits in the character of the deceased is considered as falling within the compass of Christian propriety. As a rule, Reformed ministers are not given to sprinkling eulogistic flowers upon the coffin-lids of departed saints, and yet they do not pretend to be more circumspect in such matters than the "voice from heaven" which never hesitates to say: "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors," followed by their

# Good Works.

The Reformed Church does not regard good works in the Romish sense as possessed of saving merit. Besides being testimonials of faith and fruits of thankfulness, they are viewed as among the best evidences of incipient conformability to the Divine law on the part of those who themselves are created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Christian faith,

acceptable worship and good works are logically related and inseparable. As a rule, neither one can exist or be performed without the other two. Consistently holding and practicing these principles of evangelical truth, the Reformed Church has neither been barren nor unfruitful in the vineyard of the Lord. Unassuming in their pretentions, and unaccompanied by the blowing of trumpets, these deeds of love for the Master and for the promotion of his cause will doubtless be made manifest in that day when every man's work shall be tried of what sort it is.

Besides the results of individual efforts, the Church is doing much organized work in a very efficient manner. No societies in and of the Church are organized for general Church work without the approval of the General Synod. Among these are the

# Women's Missionary Societies.

The Reformed Church, recognizing the office of deaconess as it existed in the apostolic Church, and as afterwards re-affirmed by the reformers of the sixteenth century, consistently authorizes and encourages its female members to organize themselves into missionary bands or societies in such manner as to them may seem most proper. These societies are quite numerous and influential for good. They are congregational, classical and synodical, all culminating in the Women's Missionary Society, embracing the entire field of the General Synod. They are conducted to the mutual edification of their members, and in such way as to enlist the sympathies and secure the co-operation of many of the best women in the church in behalf of the great work which they are helping to do. They pay their monies into the common treasuries of the General Synod's Board, while they retain the right to indicate the particular mission or object of their charities. A considerable portion of the funds thus raised by the women of the Reformed Church, have so far been appropriated to the maintainance of the Girls' School in Sendai, Japan, where some of the more fully qualified and consecrated of their sex are now at work in their noble efforts to rescue their degraded sisters from the low estate of sin and death and raise them to the higher plane of Christian civilization on earth, and the hope of immortal blessedness in heaven.

# TEMPERANCE.

Looking upon intemperance as one of the forms in which the depravity of fallen human nature manifests itself, the Reformed Church is earnestly and assiduously engaged in applying the remedy which has been provided by Divine wisdom and goodness for the permanent cure of this terrible evil. That remedy the Church finds in the gospel as the power of God unto salvation from every vice that unregenerated humanity is heir to. It holds that no other power can save man thoroughly and make him every whit whole. Indeed, the Church is so fully aware of the enormity of this prevailing vice, and so radical in its views as to the proper remedy and treatment thereof, that it admits no one into membership until he takes the pledge and binds himself by the most solemn vows of God to live soberly and righteously in this present evil world.

Concerning the effects of the evil of intemperance as they loudly call for sanitary treatment and for the protection of society and property from the ruthless ravages of this vice, the Church fosters a strong and growing sentiment in favor of such change in the organic laws of

this country as shall, if practicable, prohibit the manufacture and sale of all alcoholic stimulents as beverages. In this relation to the momentous question the Reformed Church is eminently It has long since executed judgconsistent. ment in the house of God. Distillers, brewers and bibbers are not found among its bright and shining lights. Neither is this increasing condition of spiritual healthfulness promoted by ecclesiastical legislation upon the subject. The vigorous workings of the Church's life carries all such unassimilable substance to the surface. and healthful discipline ejects it from the body. This is done not so much by an occasional great effort as by the constant workings of a great power. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ, wherever it is permitted to do its perfect work, makes and keeps each Christian congregation free from the law of such great sin and death. No man engaged in manufacturing or vending intoxicants is welcomed or wanted at the communion table of the Reformed Church. So far as known, it has no saloon keepers' name on the long list of its membership. If by some oversight or pandering there be such a monstrous anomaly somewhere retained in the Church that once sealed its purity by the blood of martyrs, all parties connected with such crime had better hasten to take a large dose of repentance or look out for the thunder and lightning of the wrath to come.

The following was adopted by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States at its last triennial session with respect to this subject:

Resolved, That we view with profound regret and sorrow the great evil of intemperance, and especially its sad and deadly fruits, crime, poverty, and temporal and eternal death, and that we here and now, before God and the nation, record our protest against it, and earnestly call upon our synods, classes and churches to unite with us in zealous and persistent Christian efforts, looking towards its speedy extermination.

# CUSTOMS NOT FOLLOWED.

For good and sufficient reasons the Reformed Church does not indulge in such carnal practices as those which helped to make the Reformation necessary. It does not forget the correctness of the general principle that similar combinations of facts and forces produce like results.

Though history may not literally repeat itself, God is still in history, and will repeat the vindication of his own insulted majesty whenever the same excess of riot in the most highly favored portion of his dominion calls for another revolution in the Church or a catastrophe for the world. Aiming to avoid false doctrines, the Reformed Church is also determined to shun corrupt and silly practices. With one eye of vigilance toward Rome, it also casts a constant glance of suspicious attention in the direction of rationalism and religious sentimentality. It has no more admiration for gorgeous ritualism on the one hand than it has for gushous ranterism on the other. Others may possibly feel secure, but the Church of the Reformation realizes that there are tendencies at work, even in our blessed Protestantism, that indicate danger either of a relapse or of false progress.

What does the present state of Christendom portend? Is there not danger of another radical though gradual departure from the faith and practice of primitive Christianity? Is there no reason to fear another entangling alliance between the Church and the world? Those

who read and discern the most ominous signs of the times see a tendency in our most popular types of religion toward a compromise with the empire of whitewashed darkness.

The history of the Church preceding the Reformation is full of warning to Protestants not to pass that way. How is that warning now heeded? Is there not already a general demand for Zwingli, Luther and Calvin to re-appear upon the stage of the world's great theater? What was the practical culmination of the carnival in Rome's pre-Reformation history? Was not the lucrative sale of indulgences the audacity of her crime? Was it not this monstrous traffic in sanctioned sin that fired the zeal of Zwingli in Switzerland and Luther in Germany? And are not many Protestants now repeating the great crime which once treated the salvation of the human soul as a merchandise, and turned the temples of God into theaters of amusement? What is the meaning of Church fairs, religious gambling and pious trickery resorted to by so many congregations who thus sell the Master for even less than thirty pieces of silver?

It is claimed that amusements are not neces-

sarily evil. Granted. But did Christ ordain the Church to furnish the world with amuse-Should the King's daughter, "all ments? glorious within," become a beggar's fool? It is claimed that money must be raised to meet the wants of the Church. Very true. But has the Church of Christ no legitimate resources or revenues that it must pander to the animal side of human nature in order to raise a reasonable tribute for the King of Glory? It has less need of money than it has to possess and practice consistency, purity, self-denial and that most excellent gift of heaven-born charity without which all its deeds and all its dollars are abominable in the sight of God, and worthless in the work of advancing his kingdom in the world. It is possible for Churchanity with great evangelical pretentions to be substituted for Christianity. When such is the case, men are in danger of listening to the siren-song of false religion until they rock themselves to sleep in the cradle of a fatal delusion. Heaven have mercy upon the congregations that are now prostituting religion to the making of money and amusement!

The Reformed Church has no use for such

methods. It yet retains too many of the battle scars received in rescuing the faith once delivered to the saints to be seduced by any such instigations of the world, the flesh or the devil. Besides, the Church of the Reformation has holier enjoyments for its children. It has no need for an idiotic neck-tie party to furnish amusements. These are left to be managed by the warden of the penitentiary who usually suspends the principal actor in the performance, and in so doing sets an example that all Churchwardens would do well to follow. Neither is it so destitute of sociability that it needs to cultivate that grace by turning the house of prayer into the tail end of a theater that the holy and peculiar people of God may listen to the mocking bird of "crazy suppers" and carnal carousings. Out upon such babboonery among the saints! The Reformed Church is rich in all the essential elements of sociability, and full of the means of healthful entertainment for the consistent disciples of Christ; but it has no room for mum-socials, bean jugglery or any other form of religious dissipation that worketh an abomination or maketh a lie. If any of its members have fellowship with such unfruitful works of darkness, they have not yet departed far enough from Egypt to have lost their relish for the garlic and leeks that grow in the valley of the world's dark Nile.

# FRATERNAL RELATIONS.

The Reformed Church is not narrowhearted; neither does it claim to surpass all others in holding "the principles of the doctrines of Christ." Such pretention is not necessary to maintain its precedence in Protestant Church history, and to enjoy the peculiar felicity of possessing a title which is as significant as it is unsectarian. It believes in an ecclesiastical brotherhood as broad as the intercessory prayer of the one great Master; and holds that this brotherhood does in fact and should in form include all who are "called to be saints." Having a direct lineal descent, and also by inheritance a broader name than other Protestant bodies, it can well afford to consider any interdenominational movement that may have for its object a higher unity in all essential things.

The union of all the Churches is both desirable and attainable. Any other view of the matter would be out of harmony with the spirit

and history of the Church which never became a denomination by any act of its own. The Church of the Reformation neither legislated itself into ecclesiastical being nor organized itself into a distinct body. It was born. The subsequent organization of other separate bodies compelled the Reformed Church to assume the appearance of a denomination in distinction from those which are such in fact. This pre-eminence in the family of evangelical churches gives it not only the vantage ground, but also the central position of responsibility in the solution of the great problem of Church union. This problem is forcing itself to the front. Its solution will be found in that part of the great hereafter which is close at hand. The Reformed Church will, as usual, perform the humble yet important part assigned it by the Lord of all. Its peculiar relation to the absorbing question can not be overlooked. The evangelical mother and grandmother of such a large and scattered ecclesiastical progeny would probably be justified in extending an invitation to all the children to arrange for a family reunion under the roof of the old family mansion.

This, then, is the relation of the Reformed Church to others in the matter of fraternization and Christian unity. It is most heartily in favor of union as fast as the indications of Providence are made obvious to the eye of intelligent faith, and as far as such union would accelerate the proper progress of Christ's kingdom in the world. To this end and in this blessed hope the most friendly greetings are extended to all. Let brotherly love continue. In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity. With this sentiment of amity inscribed upon its banner, the Reformed Church will, in the meantime, not cease its advocacy and defense of the principles for which it first raised the battle-cry against the papal powers of darkness. It will continue to hold aloft the Apostles' Creed as the best formula of Scriptural teaching ever produced by the combined piety and wisdom of Christendom. This venerable symbol of faith is offered as a basis sufficiently historic, positive and broad for the only union that would help to chase the shadows of sectarian night from the earth, and hasten the dawn of the millennial day. Even so, come, Lord, Jesus.

# PRAYERS FOR THE FAMILY.

As family worship is observed in every truly pious household of the Reformed Church, and as some are benefitted by the help afforded in the use of sound words, the following prayers from the Directory of Worship are here given, and their use recommended in connection with the reading of a portion of Scripture:

## SUNDAY MORNING.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, we thank thee for the rest of the past night and for the light of this holy day. Lift upon us, we beseech thee, the light of thy countenance, and be gracious unto us. We are not worthy of the least of thy favors, for we have sinned against thee in thought, word and deed. We pray for pardon through the infinite merits of our Lord and Savior. Cleanse us from all our guilt, and give us the spirit of adoption whereby we may call thee, Abba, Father.

Help us, on this day of sacred rest, to lift up our hearts unto thee, who art the source of all light and life. As thou hast given us to have part in the resurrection of our Lord, help us to seek those things that are above. Deliver us from the spirit of worldliness, and suffer us not to seek our portion in this life. Fill our hearts with love to thee, and charity towards our fellowmen. Prepare us, by thy Holy Spirit, for the worship of the sanctuary, and enable us to join with thy people in offering to thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. Bless us as a family now gathered around the mercy seat. Bind us together in the spirit of love, and strengthen us to perform our duties faithfully to thee and to one another. Make us patient under all our

trials. Guide us in the narrow way that leadeth unto everlasting life, and bring us at last into thy heavenly kingdom to dwell with thee for evermore.

Let thy blessing rest, this day, upon thy Church throughout the world. Regard in special mercy all who meet in thy holy courts. Manifest thyself unto thy people as thou doest not unto the world. Give unto them peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Draw unto thee, through the preaching of thy Word, those who are still out of the ark of safety, and may many be born into the kingdom of thy dear Son our Lord. Incline the hearts of men everywhere to receive thy holy Word. Send forth thy light and thy truth to the ends of the earth. Bless the ministrations of all missionaries in the destitute portions of this land and in heathen lands, and bring in the joyous time when all nations and kindreds and tongues shall come into thy fold.

O thou merciful and gracious God, whose tender mercies are over all thy works, remember the children of affliction and sorrow. Support the needy and oppressed; protect and cheer the destitute widow and orphan; restore the sick; prepare the dying for death; sanctify the merciful chastisements of thy hand to all who are enduring them, and cause that their afflictions may promote their spiritual and eternal good.

We pray for our kindred and friends, that thou wouldest mercifully watch over them, keep them from evil, lead them in the way of righteousness, and prepare them for an inheritance in thy heavenly kingdom.

Hear us, our heavenly Father, in these our humble petitions, and grant unto us all things that we need, for body and soul, for time and eternity, for the sake of our Lord and Savior, who has taught us to pray:

Our Father who art in heaven, &c. Amen.

## SUNDAY EVENING.

Most merciful and gracious God, our heavenly Father, we come into thy presence through the mediation of our great High Priest, and in his name offer unto thee our evening tribute of thanksgiving and praise. We thank thee for all thy favors and blessings bestowed upon us and upon all men. Especially do we thank thee for the blessings we have received from thy hand during this holy day. Thou hast not only supplied our bodily wants, but thou hast given unto us the bread of life. We thank thee for the glorious gospel of thy dear Son which we have heard, and for the precious hopes with which thou hast inspired us through thy holy Word. Help us to look unto Jesus Christ as our only Savior from sin and death, and to put our whole trust in thee. Enlighten us more and more by the truth as it is in Jesus. Give us an abiding sense of thy goodness, and a childlike confidence in thy love and mercy. Keep us from wandering from thy paths, and lead us in the way of life. Defend us from all the assaults of our enemies, and deliver us from all our sins. We acknowledge and confess our sin and guilt; grant us thy pardon for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Purify us by thy grace, and help us to consecrate ourselves anew to thy holy service. May we seek day by day to glorify thee in our bodies and spirits, which are thine.

We pray that thy blessing may rest upon the means of grace, upon the preaching of thy Word and the administration of thy holy sacraments. Build up thy people in their most holy faith. Have mercy upon those who know thee not. Draw them unto thyself, and deliver them from the bondage of sin. Gather them into thy fold, where they shall be free from the power of the evil one. Especially do thou have pity

upon all who are in suffering and sorrow. Be a father to the fatherless, a friend to the friendless, support and comfort the sick, and prepare the dying for death.

Bless the rulers of our land and nation, the President of the United States, the Governor of this Commonwealth, and all who are in authority over us; and cause that justice and truth may abound among us, and that all evil be overcome and destroyed. Save and deliver our nation from infidelity and vice, and establish us among the nations of the earth for thy honor and glory, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We now commit ourselves into thy hands for this night. May thy protection be over us as we lie in defenseless sleep, and give unto us refreshing repose, so that we may be refreshed and strengthened for the labors and duties of the coming week. And when we come to the evening of life, and the shades of death gather around us, be thou our strength and support, and receive our spirits into thy rest. And whatever else we need we would express unto thee in the words which our Savior has taught us:

Our Father who art in heaven, &c. Amen.

# WEEK DAY MORNING.

Merciful and gracious God, our heavenly Father, we bow down before thee, and worship thee, the only true and living God. We thank thee for the rest of the past night. Help us to remember how many have passed its hours in suffering and sorrow, whilst thou hast granted unto us a comfortable and refreshing repose. And now as we enter upon the care and toil of another day, we invoke thy blessing upon us. Help us to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ,

whereby we may obtain the forgiveness of our sins, and be united to thee by thy Holy Spirit. Give us strength to crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, so that sin may no more have dominion over us. Grant us grace to offer ourselves unto thee a sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise, in body and in soul, in this life, and to obtain in the world to come life everlasting.

Defend us, O Lord, this day, from all motions of sin in our hearts, and from all hurtful influences from the world and evil spirits. Be near to us in the hour of temptation, and sustain us by thy conquering power. May we be thankful in prosperity and patient in adversity, and trust in thy love and mercy for all future good. Grant us grace to be just and upright in all our dealings; quiet and peaceable among our neighbors; full of compassion towards the needy and afflicted; and ever ready to do good to all men.

We pray for thy blessing upon our fellowmen. Protect and defend thy people from all evil, and enable them to walk before thee in the way of thy commandments. May the impenitent be brought to repentance by thy goodness, and by thy grace be led to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Add to the number of thy faithful worshipers, and extend thy kingdom over all the earth. Bless our friends and relatives. Watch over and keep them from all harm and danger, and lead them in the way of righteousness and peace.

O Lord, our prayers are now before thee. Wherein we fail in asking do thou not fail in giving, but graciously supply us with all needed blessings, seeing that we ask in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom, with thee, the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, forever and ever.

Our Father, who art in heaven, &c. Amen.

## WEEK DAY EVENING.

O Lord, our Father in heaven, we thy children once more approach the mercy seat to offer up our tribute of thanksgiving and praise. Accept our evening sacrifice, and pour out upon us the fullness of thy grace. For thy care of us this day we give thee hearty thanks. May thy goodness, as it is dispensed to us from day to day, lead us to repentance for our sins, and help us to consecrate ourselves anew this night to thy holy service.

O holy Savior, we bless thee for what thou hast done for our salvation. We praise thee for thy humiliation, and for thy death upon the cross to redeem us from sin and death. We bless thee for thy triumphant resurrection, for thy glorious ascension into heaven, and for thine intercession before the Father, as our Advocate and Mediator.

Let the same mind be in us, O Lord, which was in thee, that we may follow thee in thy humility; bear reproach meekly as thou didst bear it; and forgive our enemies, as thou forgavest thy murderers. Help us to live to thee, and when we die may we die in thee, commending our souls into the hands of our heavenly Father, with the full assurance of being raised up at the last day in thine own glorious image.

O Lord, our gracious Redeemer, we now commit ourselves into thy hands. Be with us when we lie down, and when we rise up; be with us in sickness and in health; and when we come to the close of our pilgrimage upon earth, and our labors here are at an end, receive us with all thy saints in glory everlasting; and all the glory shall be given to thee, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, art alone worthy of praise and glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## A PRAYER FOR THE SICK.

O Lord God, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind; regard with tender compassion this thy servant, whom it hath pleased thee to visit with bodily affliction and disease. Be graciously near to him in the hour of his need. Grant unto him, we beseech thee, true repentance for all his sins, a firm and steady trust in the merits of thy Son, Jesus Christ, and grace to be in perfect charity with all men. Enable him to cast all his cares upon thee, and to yield himself with childlike submission to thy righteous will.

God of all power and grace, bless, we entreat thee, the means used for his recovery, rebuke the violence of disease, and raise him up from his bed of pain, that being delivered by thy compassion he may walk before thee in newness of life. But if, O most wise and merciful Father, this sickness should be unto death, grant him, we humbly implore thee, a comfortable release from all his sufferings. Let the arms of thine everlasting love be around him, and, when flesh and heart shall fail, be thou the strength of his heart and his portion for evermore: through the mediation and merits of thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

# A PRAYER FOR A SICK CHILD.

O Almighty God and merciful Father, to whom alone belong the issues of life and death; look down from heaven, we humbly beseech thee, with the eyes of mercy upon this child, now lying upon the bed of sickness. Visit him, O Lord, with thy salvation, deliver him in thy good appointed time from his bodily pain, and save his soul for thy mercies' sake; that if it shall

be thy pleasure to prolong his days here on earth, he may live to thee, and be an instrument of thy glory, by serving thee faithfully, and doing good in his generation; or else receive him into those heavenly habitations, where the souls of those who sleep in the Lord Jesus, enjoy perpetual rest and felicity. Grant this, O Lord, for thy mercies' sake, in the name of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

## PRAYER FOR A DEPARTING SOUL.

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of just men made perfect, we humbly commend our departing brother into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator and most merciful Savior; beseeching thee that his soul may be precious in thy sight. Wash him, we pray thee, in the blood of that immaculate Lamb that was slain to take away the sins of the world; that whatsoever defilements he may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and wicked world, through the lusts of the flesh or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away, he may be presented pure and without spot before thee. Vouchsafe to him a quiet passage, and guide him through the valley of the shadow of death. Place him in the habitations of light and peace, in the company of thy saints and faithful people who are gone before; and in the resurrection of the just do thou make him partaker of the heavenly inheritance; there to reign with thy holy apostles, with the goodly company of prophets and martyrs, and with all thy saints, in glory and blessedness, forever and ever. Amen.

# FORMS.

The following forms are found in the Constitution and printed minutes. Their use has been authorized by the Church:

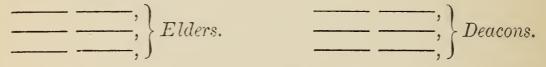
FORM OF A PETITION TO ORGANIZE A CON-GREGATION.

(Date.) [Signed by.]

# CALL TO A MINISTER.

To the Rev. A—— G——.

To encourage you in the discharge of the duties of your important office, we promise you, in the name of



# CONSTITUTION OF A CHURCH.

## DIRECTIONS.

It shall be previously announced that the members of the congregation will meet at a designated time for the purpose of adopting a Constitution and By-Laws for the government of the Church. At the meeting the minister shall preside, and a clerk shall keep a true record of the proceedings, and the Constitution as adopted shall be entered into the Church Book, certified to by the President and Clerk.

# ARTICLE I.

### NAME AND OBJECT.

Sec. 1.—The name and title of this congregation shall be "The —— Reformed Church of ————.

- SEC. 2.—Its object shall be to provide its members with the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the exercise of Christian Discipline, in accordance with the Confession of Faith known as the Heidelberg Catechism.
- Sec. 3.—This congregation shall be an organic member of the Reformed Church in the United States, and shall be governed by its Constitution and Laws.

## ARTICLE II.

### OF THE OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES.

- SEC. 1.—The officers shall be a pastor, [4] elders, and [4] deacons, who shall constitute the Consistory and the Board of Trustees.
- SEC. 2.—The duties of the Pastor, Elders, Deacons and Trustees shall be such as are laid down in the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.
- SEC. 3.—The Consistory shall, at its annual meeting, or as soon thereafter as possible, elect a treasurer, clerk and such other officers as may be necessary.
- SEC. 4.—The Consistory shall meet annually on [Easter Monday] for the transaction of business, and final settlement with the Treasurer and other officers; and [quarterly or monthly] on ——; and at such other times as may be necessary.
- SEC. 5.—The members of the Consistory shall constitute the Board of Trustees, and shall have the management of all the property of the congregation, real, personal and mixed, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.

## ARTICLE III.

### OF ELECTIONS.

SEC. 1.—Every member in good standing (and who has contributed to the support of the congregation, according to his ability, during the year preceding the election) shall be entitled to vote at all elections.

Sec. 2.—An election shall be held for pastor whenever the Consistory shall nominate one and appoint a meeting for the purpose (according to the Constitution of the Joint Consistory of the charge). At this election, a president, clerk and three judges of election shall be appointed who shall certify the result to the Clerk of the Consistory. Every minister who may be elected must, before he can be installed or inducted into office, be a minister in good standing in the Classis to which the congregation belongs.

SEC. 3.—An election for [2] elders and [2] deacons shall be held annually on (Easter Monday,) and those thus chosen shall serve two years, or until their successors are chosen and installed.

SEC. 4.—Nominations for the offices of elder and deacon shall be made by the consistory; two names presented for each officer to be elected. Public notice of the nomination shall be given from the pulpit, at least one week before the election. At the meeting for the election, one additional name for each officer to be elected may be put in nomination, three communicant members of the congregation requesting it. No person shall be voted for, not regularly nominated. All nominees must be in full communion with the Church, and earnestly devoted to the cause of Christ.

Sec. 5.—In case of vacancies by death, removal, or otherwise, the Consistory can, if so minded, appoint a day for a special election to fill the vacancy.

## ARTICLE IV.

### OF MEMBERS AND THEIR DUTIES.

- Sec. 1.—Every person is a member of this congregation who has been duly received into connection with it by confirmation, by letter, or by renewal of profession, according to the mode prescribed by the Constitution of the Reformed Church in the United States.
- SEC. 2.—Every member shall strive to promote the general welfare of the Church, and especially by a consistent life and walk, and shall annually contribute according to his ability towards its support.

## ARTICLE V.

#### AMENDMENTS AND BY-LAWS.

Sec. 1.—This Constitution, or any part of it, may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, at a meeting called for the purpose, provided that at least ten days' notice of the same shall have been given.

# DISMISSION OF A CHURCH-MEMBER.

relation to this Church shall cease, of which due notice must be given to us by the congregation by which——is received.

By order of the Consistory..

# Constitution of the Joint Consistory of a Charge.

#### DIRECTIONS.

It shall be publicly announced that the members of the different Consistories of the charge shall meet at a designated time and place for the adoption of a Constitution and By-Laws for the government of the charge. At this meeting the pastor, or in his absence an elder shall preside, and a clerk shall keep a true record of the proceedings, and shall certify the Constitution as adopted to the different Consistories, who shall cause the same to be entered in their respective Church Books.

#### FORM.

ART. 1.—This Association shall be known as "The Joint Consistory of—Charge, in—," and shall be composed of the members of the Consistories of the several congregations composing the charge, and be subject to the Constitution and Rules of the Reformed Church in the United States.

ART. 2.—Its object shall be to provide the charge with the stated preaching of the gospel, and other means of grace, and to attend to whatever relates to the general interest of the charge. ART. 3.—It shall appoint all necessary officers, such as a President, a Clerk, etc., who shall be elected at its annual meeting, and serve until their successors are elected.

ART. 4.—The Joint Consistory shall meet annually on [the Saturday before Whitsuntide], and as often during the year, upon the call of the President, as may be necessary.

ART. 5.—In case the office of pastor becomes vacant by death, resignation, or otherwise, a pastor shall be chosen in the following manner: The Joint Consistory, as such, or by a committee, may invite ministers to visit and preach in the charge. It shall then nominate one as a candidate, who shall preach in each congregation, of which due notice shall be given, and the balloting shall be for or against the nominee. If a majority of the votes in the whole charge be for him, a call shall be made out by the Joint Consistory.

ART. 6.—When a pastor desires to resign, he shall hand in his written resignation to the Joint Consistory, and ask that body to unite with him in requesting classis to dissolve the pastoral relation. The Joint Consistory may provisionally accept his resignation, or may submit it to the separate congregations for their action, and shall do so if requested by six members in writing.

ART. 7.—The support of the pastor shall be distributed among the congregations as may from time to time be agreed upon in the Joint Consistory. At its annual meeting it shall be the duty of the Joint Consistory to see that this obligation is punctually discharged.

ART. 8.—The Joint Consistory may purchase and hold in trust, grounds for parsonage and other church purposes, improve and manage the same; and whenever any one of the congregations shall become separated from the charge by the action of the classis, it shall be entitled to an equitable repayment of its share in the same, if demanded.

ART. 9.—The time of the pastor shall be devoted to the several congregations in such ratio as shall from time to time be agreed upon by the Joint Consistory and pastor.

ART. 10.—To the Joint Consistory belongs the duty of electing delegates to classis, synods, and other meetings, and providing for their traveling expenses and those of the pastor.

ART. 11.—This Constitution can only be altered and amended at an annual meeting, and by a vote of two-thirds of the members.

(NOTE.—The Joint Consistory, especially if it holds real estate, ought to become an incorporated body.)

# CONSTITUTION FOR A SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

ART. 1.—This school shall be called the Sunday-school of —————. It shall consist of the pastor, the officers, the teachers and the scholars.

ART. 2.—The object of this school shall be, the training of its members in Christian character, by means of worship and the diligent study of the sacred Scriptures.

ART. 3.—The superintendent shall be appointed by the Consistory, (or elected by the teachers). The other officers shall be elected by the school annually. The teachers shall be appointed by the superintendent, with the concurrence of the pastor.

ART. 4.—This school shall be under the supervision of a Sunday-school Board, consisting of the pastor, the consistory, the officers and teachers of the school.

ART. 5.—Regular meetings of this board shall be held

quarterly, on————, for the transaction of such business as relates to the interests of the school, at which the following order shall be observed: 1. Singing and Prayer; 2. Calling the Roll; 3. Reading the Minutes; 4. Unfinished Business; 5. Reports from Committees; 6. Report from Superintendent; 7. Report from the Treasurer; 8. Report from the Librarian; 9. Reports from the Teachers; 10. Miscellaneous.

ART. 6.—Special meetings of the board may be called by the pastor, or by the superintendent, or by any three of the members.

ART. 7.—This Constitution may be altered or amended by the board, provided that the changes be proposed in writing at one meeting and acted upon at a subsequent meeting.

# Constitution for Woman's Missionary Society.

# ARTICLE I.

This Society shall be called the "Woman's Missionary Society" of the——Reformed Church of——.

# ARTICLE II.

The object of this Society shall be to arouse the interest and unite the efforts of the women of the congregation in missionary work.

# ARTICLE III.

The members of this Society shall consist of such women of the congregation as are willing to pay a monthly fee of not less than——[See Note.]

## ARTICLE IV.

The officers of this Society shall be, President, Vicepresident, Recording and Corresponding Secretaries and Treasurer; these officers, together with the pastor, shall constitute an Executive Committee.

## ARTICLE V.

The President or Vice-president shall preside at all meetings of the Society.

The Recording Secretary shall keep a complete roll of the members of the Society and a careful record of its proceedings.

The Corresponding Secretary shall give notice of all meetings and have charge of the correspondence of the Society.

The Treasurer shall have charge of the finances of the Society, both as to receiving and disbursing, and shall make a monthly report of the same, and a *complete* annual report. She shall pay only such orders as are signed by the President.

It shall be the duty of the Executive Committee to prepare programs for meetings, and to devise ways and means of arousing interest and raising money. It shall communicate, through the Corresponding Secretary, with other missionary societies in order to exchange views and experiences and thus increase their knowledge and improve their methods of work.

# ARTICLE VI.

The meetings shall be held the——of the month at——, and shall be opened and closed with devotional exercises.

# ARTICLE VII.

The officers shall be elected annually by ballot.

## ARTICLE VIII.

This Constitution can be amended at any regular meeting of the Society, by a vote of two-thirds of the members present, notice having been given at a previous meeting.

**Note.**—In some instances, as in the country, it may be necessary to have the membership include men, women, and children.

In others, it may be better to have no specified fee, but each member be permitted to give according to the dictates of his conscience.

In all cases, each one should be encouraged to give "as the Lord has prospered him."

It is of course, understood, that this Constitution, as well as the one for Mission Bands, is given simply as a suggestive basis for missionary organizations. It is expected that each congregation will adapt them to its own needs.

# Constitution for Mission Bands.

## ARTICLE I.

This Society shall be called "THE MISSION BAND" of the Reformed Church of———.

# ARTICLE II.

Its object shall be to interest and instruct the children in missionary work, and raise funds for the same.

# ARTICLE III.

The membership of this Society shall consist of the children and youth of the congregation, and others who may be deemed worthy of membership.

# ARTICLE IV.

The officers of this Band shall be President, Vicepresident, Secretary and Treasurer. There shall also be a Visiting Committee, to be appointed monthly.

## ARTICLE V.

The President or Vice-president shall preside at all meetings of the Society.

The Secretary shall keep a roll of the members and a careful record of the proceedings.

The Treasurer shall take charge of the funds and make a monthly report of the same.

The Treasurer shall disburse them according to the vote of the Society, and with the consent of the pastor.

The Visiting Committee shall visit all the children of the congregation and others, and invite them to become members. This committee shall also do the errands of the Society.

## ARTICLE VI.

The meetings of the Band shall be held on the——— of the month, at the church, unless otherwise designated, and shall be opened and closed with devotional exercises.

# ARTICLE VII.

The election of officers shall take place semi-annually (or quarterly,) at one of the regular meetings of the Band.

# ARTICLE VIII.

The Constitution can be amended at any regular meeting of the Society, by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided notice has been given at a previous meeting.

# ARTICLE IX.

This Band shall be under the control of one or more of the older members of the Church, who shall be appointed by the consistory.







